

Preparing for Rural Ministry: A Qualitative Analysis of Curriculum used in Theological  
Education to Prepare Clergy for Ministry in a Rural Context

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PREPARING FOR RURAL MINISTRY: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF CURRICULUM USED IN  
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION TO PREPARE CLERGY FOR MINISTRY IN A RURAL CONTEXT

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## ABSTRACT

Increasing the capacity of rural clergy through their educational preparation is important. Unfortunately, there is lack of research and understanding about the educational preparation of clergy to work in rural communities. This qualitative content analysis of course descriptions, goals and objectives and an analysis of the content covered in the syllabi, reading materials and films was conducted to provide current and sociologically informed knowledge and understanding of rural clergy preparation programs. The results of this analysis give scholars and educators knowledge of the manner and extent clergy are prepared to work in a church located in a rural community.

Five organizations, purposively chosen, sent twenty syllabi in response to a request for curriculum materials used to prepare clergy to work in a rural context. Duke Divinity School submitted two syllabi used in their *Thriving Rural Communities* program. Wartburg Theological Seminary submitted six syllabi used in their *Center for Theology and Land* program. The Rural Home Missionary Association sent five syllabi used in the *Town and Country Training* program. Luther Seminary submitted six syllabi and Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity provided one syllabus.

The qualitative content analysis examined the course descriptions, goals and objectives from twenty syllabi seeking to discover the general intent and purposes behind the educational preparation of clergy to work in a rural context. The subjects and activities outlined on sixty-seven syllabus pages, seventy-three books and articles,

and sixteen films were examined seeking to describe the content of the course materials used to educationally prepare clergy to work in a rural context.

Three themes were found that describe the general intent and purposes for the preparation of clergy to work in a rural context. The three themes are: Contextual (to produce knowledge that informs students about the basic elements of life in rural areas, trends that shape rural life, and the norms and values of rural culture); Professional Skills Development (to teach clergy “how-to” skills needed in order to be a successful rural minister such as pastoral care and church leadership); and Issue Specific (to teach students how to educate and/ or advocate for specific issues within the rural community, such as immigration).

Seven themes describing a majority of the course content were discovered. These themes are: Rural Context (demographic, social, economic factors), Rural Churches (characteristics of rural churches), Rural Culture (norm, values, and attitudes typical in rural communities), Pastoral Care in a Rural Context (caring for rural people), Leadership in a Rural Context (leading rural churches and people), Agriculture and Environment (agricultural practices and sustainable environmental solutions), and Demographic Changes in Rural Areas (migration and ethnic diversification).

This new knowledge was placed into the context of the historical Rural Church Movement, which was an effort to prepare clergy for the campaign for rural progress initiated by President Theodore Roosevelt’s Country Life Commission in 1909. Recommendations were made for additional training for clergy preparing to work in a rural context by discussing the social and economic changes that have taken place in the

century since the Country Life Commission report. It was determined that clergy currently preparing to work in a rural context need the capacity to be community leaders in order to coach, guide and care for rural communities experiencing social change.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

“We need to start rethinking church. If we are going to make a change in Perry County, it will have to start with the churches.” This comment and others like it came from a focus group meeting of community leaders in Perry County, Alabama in 2010 (Sherin & Sherin, 2011). Perry County is the second poorest county in Alabama and the 57th poorest county in the United States according to the household income data from the US Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service.

This discussion and others like it are taking place throughout rural America. Like many rural counties, this community is seeking better ways to enhance life in their community. At a time when economic instability is high, communities are looking within themselves for people who are willing to come together for the good of the community. Consequently, clergy working throughout rural America have the potential to make a considerable impact in the communities where they work.

In order for rural clergy to be most successful in their contributions to the communities, they must have an increased capacity to understand the components of a successful community (Smith, 1969). Increasing the capacity of rural clergy through their educational preparation is important. Unfortunately, there is lack of research and understanding about the educational preparation of clergy to work in rural communities. This lack of research and understanding results in lost opportunities to have a positive impact in the lives of rural residents and rural communities. This gap in knowledge and understanding comes at a crucial time.

Since 2009, two federally sponsored efforts have been initiated over concern for rural America. In 2009, the United States Department of Agriculture conducted listening sessions in twenty-two rural communities across America. The “Rural Tour” ended with the “National Summit of Rural America: A Dialogue for Renewing Promise” on June 3, 2010 held in Hillsboro, Missouri. In June 2011, the White House Rural Council was created by an Executive Order. President Barack Obama made an Economic Rural Tour of four Midwestern cities. Then in August 2011, the White House issued the report created by the White House Rural Council. The report was titled: “Jobs and Economic Security for Rural America.”

The concern for rural America today is reminiscent of the concern at the turn of the 20th century. During that era, President Theodore Roosevelt created a Country Life Commission to study life in rural America. Many aspects of the reports of the White House Rural Council and the Country Life Commission are similar. Both reports dealt with improving the infrastructure, health, economy, food production, and general health of rural communities.

Danbom (1979) while describing rural life in the year 1900 made several key observations. He says despite the industrial revolution happening in the urban areas, farming remained unchanged. As urban life and its modern conveniences became the standard, the disparities between rural and urban became a growing concern. Without the mechanization of industry, farming remained very labor intensive and hard work for the whole family. As the family worked together, the family was solidified as the economic, educational, and social unit of rural life (Danbom, 1979). The rural family unit

was excellent at reproducing rural life, but lacked the capacity to bring innovation to farming, education, and healthcare. Each family was isolated and independent. Their self-sufficiency and independence extended into the social life of the communities, which kept change and modernization at bay in rural America at the turn of the century.

The Country Life Commission report produced a general call to modernize rural communities. Furthermore, the report highlighted the role of rural clergy that extended beyond religious work into participation in community leadership. In contrast, the report issued by the White House Rural Council did not include any mention of churches, faith groups, clergy or religion. Instead it focused more on the federal programs available to improve rural America.

This simple contrast in the reports concerning rural America supports the findings of Gruber and Hungerman (2007). Their research found evidence that government spending crowded out faith-based charitable work during the Great Depression with the implementation of the New Deal (Gruber & Hungerman, 2007).

The Country Life Commission report and White House Rural Council report were written a full century apart. Much transpired in that century. Changes in the economy, demography, and agricultural technology over the past century have led to tremendous social change in rural America. Those social changes are still underway as rural America is changing under the pressure of globalization.

One aspect of social change is the role religious institutions have in American society and culture. These changes have been well documented (Bellah, 1985; Putnam & Campbell, 2010; Tocqueville & Reeve, 2010; Wuthnow, 1988). Nevertheless, the

clergy serving in rural churches, just as highlighted in the Country Life Commission report, are often called upon to be community leaders and to coach, guide, and care for communities facing social change. These capacities needed as a community leader are in addition to those needed as church workers and spiritual leaders. Biema provides evidence of this thought when he wrote, "It's a religious crisis, for sure... and to the extent that these churches are anchoring institutions; it's a crisis of community" (2009).

Rural communities in America are still facing hardships. Books like *Hollowing Out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What It Means for America* (Carr & Kefalas, 2009), and *Survival of Rural America: Small Victories and Bitter Harvests* (Wood, 2008) highlight some of the broad issues rural America is facing.

These hardships extend beyond the rural communities into the rural churches. Recent headlines like "Rural Churches Grapple with a Pastor Exodus," (Biema, 2009); "Steepled Beacons Flicker On Western Kansas Prairie" (Adler, 2009); "Churches' Struggles Mean Fewer Full-time Pastors" (Vegh, 2009) are all newspaper headlines concerning rural churches. These articles tell a story of overwhelmed, under-resourced and pastor-less churches in rural America. These churches and communities need clergy prepared to work in rural churches and community leaders that can coach, guide, and care for these communities facing social change.

If clergy working in rural communities need expanded capacities, then ministry preparation programs should offer an enhanced curriculum to meet the capacities needed by the clergy. In general, clergy receive their education in seminaries and divinity schools. However, the effort to provide specialized training for clergy preparing

to work in rural communities is declining (Goreham & Johnson, 1997; Judy & Judy, 1984; Rich, 1957).

Ironically, at a time when the effort to adequately prepare clergy for work in a rural context is declining, rural communities are diversifying. Rural America has diversified due to the changes in the economic base, demographic shifts, and globalization. Unfortunately, there is a lack of current research on the preparation of clergy for service in this diversified rural context.

This study seeks to describe curriculum currently being used to teach clergy as they prepare for work in a rural context. This qualitative inquiry into twenty syllabi, seventy-three book and articles, and sixteen films from five organizations preparing rural clergy, describes the general intent and purposes of the educational preparation of clergy for work in a rural context and the content of the course materials.

Qualitative research methods were used to examine twenty syllabi and their course materials to provide an analysis of rural clergy preparation. No qualitative study of this nature has been done on the topic of clergy preparing to work in a rural context. Other research is quantitative in nature (Goreham & Johnson, 1997; Judy, 1984; Smith, 1969).

Educators need new and current knowledge in order to best prepare clergy for the various ways they can assist rural communities in becoming vibrant and successful. Through a qualitative analysis and linking the new knowledge and understanding to existing research, this study seeks to create knowledge about and understanding of the

rationale or general intent and purpose for the current courses and the content found in their course materials.

The five organizations that provided the syllabi used in rural ministry preparation courses are: Duke Divinity School's Thriving Rural Communities Initiative, Wartburg Seminary's Center for Theology and Land, Rural Home Missionary Association's Town and Country Training program, Luther Seminary, and Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity.

### **Rationale**

There is a lack of current scholarly research on clergy preparing to work in a rural context. Therefore, a qualitative content analysis of course descriptions, goals and objectives and an analysis of the content covered in the subject and activities outlined in the syllabi, reading materials and films is needed to provide current and sociologically informed knowledge and understanding of rural clergy preparation programs.

Clergy are called upon to be community leaders today (Biema, 2009) supporting the findings of the Country Life Commission. To strengthen rural communities at the turn of the century, the Country Life Commission suggested increasing the capacity of leaders in rural communities. The commission's report revealed that rural clergy provided leadership and had influence in rural communities, thus becoming a target for investment to increase their capacity to help advance the modernization of rural life.

As a result of the commission's report, denominational headquarters, land grant universities, and seminaries conducted rural church studies and developed programs

aimed at preparing clergy for work in a rural context. Mark Rich in *The Rural Church Movement* (1957) found that attention given to rural church issues declined in the days of the First World War but flourished during and after the Second World War. Since then, the emphasis and resources have greatly decreased for rural clergy and churches at a time when a more socially, politically and economically diverse rural America emerged. This research will address rural clergy preparation for the more diverse rural America.

Goreham and Johnson (1997) and Judy (1984) before them, quantitatively cataloged the training programs available for clergy preparing to serve in a rural context. Despite the available programs and resources found by Goreham and Johnson (1997) and Judy (1984), J. Stephen Rhodes (1994) claims that approximately 209 (Goreham & Johnson, 1997) U.S. seminaries are not preparing students for rural ministry. He states that 60 percent of all U.S. seminaries are not offering educational opportunities related to rural ministry. Compounding the lack of rural contextual educational, a majority of seminary students come from urban or suburban areas of the United States with no exposure to rural culture (Biema, 2009). These two influences are part of a leadership crisis in rural churches and in the community according to Biema. (2009).

This study extends the knowledge beyond the current cataloging of programs that exist for clergy preparing for work in a rural context. The analysis of the course descriptions, goals and objectives describe the general intent and purposes in terms of the types of knowledge the course sought to convey. The knowledge type descriptions

were enhanced by using *A Taxonomy for Learning Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (Anderson, Krathwohl, & Bloom, 2001).

The subjects and activities from the syllabi and the information found in the textbooks, articles and films used as course materials created the data for describing the content used to educationally prepare clergy to work in a rural context. The results provide the necessary and needed knowledge and understanding to guide future curriculum changes and/or new training resources to increase the capacity of clergy serving in rural communities.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The research on rural churches and clergy, spawned by the Country Life Commission, focused on clergy helping modernize the agricultural economy found in rural America. The current report from the White House Rural Council does not mention the role of rural clergy or churches, but that does not change the fact that rural clergy are needed in other leadership capacities in rural communities.

Little scholarly work has been done on current rural clergy preparation programs in the wake of the recent changes in rural America. Factors such as diversifying the economic base, demographic change, and globalization have contributed to changes in rural areas. The purpose of this study is to create knowledge and understanding about:

- The general intent and purposes of the educational preparation of clergy to work in a rural context.

- By examining the course descriptions, goals and objectives found in syllabi
- The course content used to prepare clergy to work in a rural context.
  - By examining the subjects and activities found in syllabi
  - By examining the information contained in the textbooks, articles and other reading materials
  - By examining the films shown in courses

The twenty syllabi were supplied by five organizations: Duke Divinity School's Thriving Rural Communities Initiative, Wartburg Seminary's Center for Theology and Land, Rural Home Missionary Association's Town and Country Training program, Luther Seminary, and Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity.

The results of this analysis will give scholars and educators knowledge of the manner and extent clergy are prepared to work a rural community. Additionally, the description of the course content currently being used to prepare clergy for work in a rural context will allow educators to examine ways content could be added to build the capacities needed in for clergy preparing to work in a rural context.

## **Chapter Summaries**

Chapter One is an introduction to the topic of clergy being prepared to work in a rural context. It includes a brief discussion of the historical context of rural clergy preparation. It concludes with the rationale and a statement of purpose for conducting this research.

Chapter Two reviews literature related to the history of churches spreading across the United States as people settled new areas. A brief update on the current number of rural churches in rural America is provided. The literature related to studying the preparation of rural clergy is summarized and connected to purposes for this current inquiry into the preparation of clergy for rural ministry. This chapter concludes with a review of related curriculum inquiry research examples and methods that informed this research project.

Chapter Three describes the qualitative content analysis used to examine the data compiled from the twenty syllabi collected for this research. The researcher is described within the context of the research. In addition, the purposive sample of organizations from which the syllabi were solicited is defined. A detailed account is provided about how the data was collected and analyzed. Also discussed are the methods used to address the issues of trustworthiness in this qualitative research. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the limitations found in the research methods.

Chapter Four explains the analysis of the twenty syllabi in the sample. The typology of course types that emerged from the data is discussed. Next, a list of the syllabi and organizations is provided. After the syllabi list, a detail account of the analysis is given followed by a table summarizing the results. The chapter finishes with a discussion of the information discovered during the analysis. The three course types were Contextual, Professional Skills Development for Rural Ministry, and Issue Specific.

Chapter Five explains the analysis of the course content used to prepare clergy to work in a rural context. Data from seventy-three books and articles, sixteen films, and sixty-seven syllabus pages, was compiled in order to examine the course content. Seven course content themes emerged that describe the most common content used to prepare clergy to work in a rural context. Those seven themes were: The Rural Context (demographic, social, economic factors), Rural Churches (characteristics of rural churches), Rural Culture (norm, values, and attitudes typical in rural communities), Pastoral Care in a Rural Context (caring for rural people), Leadership in a Rural Context (leading rural churches and people), Agriculture and Environment (agricultural practices and sustainable environmental solutions), and Demographic Changes in Rural Areas (migration and ethnic diversification).

An additional outcome resulted from this analysis. As the data from the syllabi was compiled, a list of the required readings and films used in the courses was constructed. This list of textbooks, articles and films can be found in Appendix A.

Chapter Six presents the lessons learned from the research by connecting the findings to the historical context of rural clergy preparation and roles. Suggestions are made to help address the challenges in rural clergy preparation. The suggestions include new content themes that should be added to rural ministry preparation curriculum. The chapter concludes with descriptions of areas for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW / THEORICTIAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter highlights the relevant literature that contributed to the understanding of the historical context of this research and literature that places this research in its current context. This research requires a qualitative analysis of the syllabi submitted to develop understanding and knowledge about current training for clergy entering a rural context. The following literature is reviewed in order to inform the analysis of the data collected from the organizations and programs preparing clergy for serving in a rural context.

### **Churches in Rural America: A Brief History**

Europeans brought with them their own religious practices. In fact, much of the early 17th century emigration from Europe was religiously motivated. The pilgrims and Puritans were persecuted for their reform efforts directed at the Church of England. The pilgrims landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. Beginning in 1630, 20,000 Puritans left England for America ("America as a Religious Refuge: The 17th Century (Religion and the Founding of the American Republic, Library of Congress Exhibition),").

Other world events, such as the potato famine (1845-1852) in Ireland, and the unraveling of Germanic culture in Europe due to war and conflict during the 19th century, caused mass immigration into America. Since the religious beliefs travel with the people that hold them, these mass migration events changed the religious landscape where the people settle (rural or urban).

In *Churching of America, 1776-1990*, Roger Finke and Rodney Stark (1992) traced the spread of churches across the frontier and highlighted some of the influences of the migrations of religious people. Their research clarifies the state of religion in early America. They document the adherence rate to churches being 17% in colonial America (Finke & Stark, 1992). For them, this was evidence the established religious organizations were not reaching the people living in colonial America.

Finke and Stark (1992) offer an explanation of the low adherence rates of the colonial era. First, they point to the “common features of all frontier settings,” which include “transience, disorder, too many men, too many scoundrels, and too few effective and committed clergy” (1992, p. 39). The second reason for low adherence was the legal establishment of church in the colonies. Citing Adam Smith and the former governor of the New Jersey Colony, Colonel Lewis Morris, Finke and Stark (1992) explain that “legal establishment steals the exertion, zeal and industry of clergy and they neglect their duties to produce commitment” (1992, p. 39).

While the Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians enjoyed the comfortable position as the established churches in early America, their monopolized market on religion was about to be burned by the flames of revival in the land. George Whitfield introduced a style of itinerant, emotional preaching that disturbed and disrupted the established churches. Whitfield’s preaching was shunned by the well-trained ministers of Harvard and Yale whose sermons had become a “species of polite literature.” Whitfield disagreed with Harvard and Yale’s training of ministers and called them the place where “Light is become darkness” (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 51).

The mainline churches of the Congregationalists, Episcopalians and Presbyterians made efforts to be the established religion. An additional effort at becoming the de facto established church came from the local political and economic elites who usually aligned with the colonial mainline bodies. Thus, in many communities, especially toward the frontier, the mainline bodies received “use” subsidies and were allowed to hold their services in schools and other public buildings without charge (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 63)

When the revival and sects broke into the religious monopoly held by the Congregationalist, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, their market share was small at first. For example, 55 percent of Americans active in a religious body were counted among Congregationalists, Episcopalians and Presbyterians in 1776 (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 54). The table below shows the shift that happened in the 74 years from 1776 to 1850 with a total adherence rate reaching 34 percent nationally.

**Table 1. Change in Adherence Rates per Denomination 1776-1850**

Denomination	Percentage of Total Adherents	
	1776	1850
Congregationalists	20.4	4.0
Episcopalians	15.7	3.5
Presbyterians	19	11.6
Baptists	16.9	20.5
Methodists	2.5	34.2
Catholics	1.8	13.9

(Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 55)

The Baptists, Methodists and the Catholics had shifted the religious landscape. They accomplished this despite the “cartel agreements and local privilege” (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 60) enjoyed by the mainline denominations of the time. The mainline groups organized against itinerant preachers. In Connecticut, statues were passed requiring itinerates to “secure written consent from local clergy before preaching” (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 62). Also, the mainline groups were helped by “front groups” like the American Home Missionary Society (AHMS). This organization collected money to build churches and support clergy in frontier areas that were “destitute of the stated ministry of the gospel of every denomination” (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 65).

These frontier areas were not churchless. The Methodists and Baptists had churches in these areas but the feeling in the AHMS was that these groups were “standing in the way” of their work (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 65). The attitude about the Baptists and Methodists persisted for decades and even surfaces in the Rural Church Movement that followed at the turn of the 20th century.

**History of Rural Church Movement.** The Rural Church Movement was given its start from the work of the Country Life Commission, which was appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908. The commission looked into the condition of rural life in light of the rapid urbanization of America. From 1860 to 1920, the number of urbanites (places with 2,500 people or more) went from 1 in 5 to over half of the population (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 202). “The commission called for an all-out effort to ‘unite the interests of education, organizations and religion into one forward movement for rebuilding rural life’” (Sanderson, 1942, p. 712) in (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 202).

Butterfield and Pinchot of the Country Life Commission were advocates of the rural church and the rural church’s influence in rural America. Their advice was to place well-trained clergy in rural churches to bring about positive social change in rural areas. Their motive was not to evangelize, but more to socialize rural people for advancement in society and culture. They saw the impact of church, not on an individual level, but on a community level, and they believed a strong rural community structure was the answer to the social issues facing rural America. Stark and Finke write:

“Their agenda was not simply the renewal of rural religion or, indeed, of rural life. They had very firm notions about what kind of religion as well as what kind of social and economic philosophy they

wanted rural Americans to embrace. In addition, many of their plans for rural America were based on misguided and sometimes arrogant assumptions” (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 207).

The negative effect of urbanization on rural churches was a misguided assumption. Urbanization was used to justify the need to be concerned for rural churches. The misguided assumption was that rural churches were losing membership due to the flight of rural dwellers to urban places; fewer people in rural areas, the competition for church members was placing rural churches in a weakened state. Warren Wilson, a leader in the Rural Church Movement, stated, “the growth of the cities has been in part at the expense of the country” (W. H. Wilson, 1911, p. 677) in (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 207). Finke and Stark say, “Wilson’s conclusions on the necessity of church unity were based on two commonly held assumptions. First, that the growth of cities lead to the decline of rural population. Second, owing to the oversupply of rural churches, all denominations were being forced to close congregations and to subsidize others” (1992, p. 207).

Finke and Stark (1992) document that this is not the real picture of rural church life and Danbom (2006) supports their findings. In fact, the rural population was growing. Danbom says, “the years between 1870 and 1900 were a time of dramatic expansion in rural America” (2006, p. 131). Finke and Stark point out that the proportion of population was gaining in urban areas, but the population of rural America was growing. (1992, p. 208)

Using data from 1916 to 1926 Finke and Stark (1992, p. 208) show that the net increase in the number of churches was 4,667. They calculated that 5,631 mainline churches closed during this time. That means more than 10,000 new churches were needed to reach the net gain of 4,667 churches. Finke and Stark state, “The “decay” of the country church was limited to the mainline: the evangelical Protestant sects still flourished” (1992, p. 209). Stark and Finke conclude the “actual country church crisis consisted of two factors: the decline of mainline churches and the growth of sectarian churches were part of the problem, not the solution” (1992, p. 209).

If the Rural Church Movement was not about the country churches reaching the rural people, then what was it about? The Rural Church Movement was born out of the Country Life Commission findings. Theodore Roosevelt wrote,

“The object of the Commission on Country Life therefore is not to help the farmer raise better crops, but to call his attention to the opportunities for better business and better living on the farm... The farmer must take advantage not only of the agricultural knowledge which is at his disposal, but of the methods which have raised and continue to raise the standards of living and of intelligence in other callings”

(Commission, Bailey, & Roosevelt, 1909, p. 4).

Shedding more light on the motivation of the commission Roosevelt writes,

“Those engaged in all other industrial and commercial callings have found it necessary, under modern economic conditions, to organize themselves for mutual advantage and for the protection of their own particular interests in relations to other interests. The farmers of every progressive European country have realized this essential fact and have found in the cooperative system exactly the form of business

combination they need.” (United States. Country Life Commission. et al., 1909, p. 4)

In Danbom’s book, *The Resisted Revolution*, Danbom (1979) provides some insight into early 1900 rural life and cultural. Danbom characterized the urban and industrial sectors as dynamic and changing and the agricultural sector located in rural America as “economically, politically, and socially static” (1979, p. 23). Danbom also states, the leaders of the Country Life Movement, “regarded an economically efficient, socially progressive, and politically stable agriculture as a necessary underpinning of industry and for the emergent industrial nation”(1979, p. 23).

Of the critics of the state of rural life, Danbom wrote,

“Thus, the concern of several national and largely urban-centered groups for the nation’s future forced a close study of American agriculture and the people who practiced it. This study revealed to the critics’ satisfaction that nothing less than a complete revolution in agriculture and rural life was necessary, and the Country Life Movement developed to achieve this end” (Danbom, 1979, p. 24).

The recommendations of the commission were three fold. First was to take stock of country life, second, nationalize extension work, and third, begin a campaign for rural progress. The campaign for rural progress was to gather “Rural teachers, librarians, clergymen, editors, physicians and others [that] may well unite with farmers in studying and discussing the rural question in all its aspects” (United States. Country Life Commission. et al., 1909, p. 19). The report also stated the importance of uniting “all institutions, all organizations, all individuals” for a great campaign for rural progress. The purpose of the campaign was nothing short of a “new rural social structure.” These

new leaders were to build an improved and permanent rural civilization. This new structure included everyone evidenced by this statement:

“The entire people need to be roused to this avenue of usefulness. Most of the new leaders must be farmers who can find not only a satisfying business career on the farm, but who will throw themselves into the service of upbuilding the community. A new race of teachers is also to appear in the country. A new rural clergy is to be trained” (United States. Country Life Commission. et al., 1909, p. 19).

Training in theology, sociology and/or rural sociology was common among the leading rural church reformers (Madison, 1986, p. 647). Colleges, seminaries, and denominational organizations employed persons with this training and expertise. They also trained the clergy for rural ministry. Essentially, the push was to modernize and industrialize country life and churches were to have a role in this transformation. In 1914, Edwin L Earp wrote,

“All the great leaders in the Rural Life movement today are practically agreed that the country church is the most important factor in the adequate solution of the problem of betterment of rural civilization. Theodore Roosevelt, Liberty H. Bailey, Kenyon L. Butterfield, Sir Horace Plunkett, Gifford Pinchot, and Albert E. Roberts, as well as many other writers and lectures upon the subject, are all in accord on this point of emphasis in the modern rural situation” (Earp, 1914, p. 33).

The Rural Church Movement had the help of a new science; sociology and more specifically, rural sociology. Charles E. Hayward wrote, “The sociological movement is born of God, and its destined to be the mightiest power behind the Gospel the world has ever known.” (Madison, 1986 p. 647) Finke and Stark (1992) wrote,

“In 1912, during the second quadrennial convention of the Federal Council of Churches... a dozen men committed to solving the problem of the rural churches met in Kenyon Butterfield’s Chicago hotel room to form a rural section of the American Sociological Society” (Madison, 1986) in (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 210)

In summary, the rural church movement was initiated by the Country Life Commission when they discovered the rural church wielded influence in rural America. The report highlighted the importance of training the clergy serving in the rural communities. A variety of training options were available for clergy serving or seeking to serve rural churches. Included were seminary programs focused on rural church service, courses offered by land-grant state universities, (usually through extension programs) and denominational departments. Around the turn of the century, much more of America was rural. The training programs for the clergy focused on how to help rural places modernize. The rural church movement has been well documented as a historical period. (McBride, 1954) (Rich, 1957) (Stone, 1984) (Wentworth, 1980) (W. H. Wilson, 1923).

**Rural Church Studies in Missouri.** Part of the history of the Rural Church Movement is located squarely at the University of Missouri. The University of Missouri once was home to the Rural Graduate Seminary from 1952 – 1972. Lawrence Hepple conducted research on rural churches in 100 rural townships in Missouri in 1952 and 1967. Hepple and his associates were interested in the similarities and differences between rural schools and rural churches regarding consolidation. Edward Hassinger

and others repeated the study and published their findings in *The Rural Church: Learning from Three Decades of Change*.(Hassinger, Holik, & Benson, 1988)

The latest in the longitudinal study of rural Missouri churches occurred in 1998. The results of this study were published in 2005 through an internet book titled, *The Rechurching of Rural America: A Report of the Restudy of Rural Churches in America*. Jere Gilles, a rural sociologist from the University of Missouri, contributed to this book. Others were Gary Farley, John Bennett and Arnold Parks

This longitudinal data is the only data documenting the changes impacting churches in rural America (Farley, Bennett, Gilles, & Parks, 2005). As rural America has transformed in many ways and the influence of urban and suburban culture has impacted rural society, the number of training options for rural clergy has decreased.

### **Churches in Rural America Today**

Among the challenges facing rural ministry preparation programs is the extreme diversity of types of communities, the various ways these communities are changing and the many methods needed to remain relevant, current, and diverse in program offerings. In order to adequately understand the content of these courses and how the diversity and changes of rural communities is addressed, proper attention needs to be given to defining rural communities and how rural clergy can become effectively engaged in these communities. *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change* (Flora & Flora, 2008) provides information and a framework that allows reflection on how the social and economic changes are impacting rural churches.

Change is the only thing that has remained unchanged in rural America. Rural America has been impacted by forces shaping the rest of the world. Even rural areas cannot hide from the forces of globalization. Below are some examples of the changes that have taken place in rural America in the past few decades.

The four rural types identified in Flora and Flora (2008) are: Amenity-Based Rapid Growth, Rapid Growth Exurban, Rural and Remote, and Persistent Poverty. These four rural types will serve as a framework to reflect on some of the opportunities and challenges facing rural churches.

**Amenity-Based Rapid Growth** communities are communities where the population is growing due to the natural resources available in the area. People are attracted to the outdoor activities and vistas that are naturally part of the landscape. People come to these areas to ski, boat, swim, raft and retire, and the growth attracts service industry jobs to the area also.

Some of the economic and social challenges in these areas include increase housing cost, and an increased strain on infrastructure and support services, which causes taxes to increase to meet the demand. If the growth is not managed, the natural resource that makes the place attractive becomes scarred or damaged. Furthermore, the influx of people changes demographic characteristics such as average age and ethnic diversity.

A rural church in an Amenity-Based Rapid Growth rural community has some unique challenges and opportunities. They have to think about the two different kinds

of immigrants: The amenity seeking immigrant and the economic opportunity immigrant that works in the service industry.

The amenity seeking migrant most likely comes from a professional background where they had the financial means to choose to relocate. These immigrants would be more accustomed to a larger “consumer” oriented churches where ministries are offered and participation is a matter of consumer choice. They would have a hard time feeling comfortable in a rural church where relational and kin-ship ties dominate interaction. Rural churches often strive to reach this group for the economic potential they bring. When changes are made to the church culture to attract new members, long-time members feel left out and abandoned.

The economic opportunity seeking immigrants are often from different ethnic groups. Rural churches respond differently to these ethnic groups. They often create separate ministries that cater to the needs of these groups. They even hold separate worship services and long term residents never mingle with the different ethnic groups. Rural churches reach out to the ethnic groups as form of missionary service by meeting physical needs in order to share faith lessons with them.

These amenity growth areas can be seasonal also. This presents an issue for churches in these areas. How do ministers convince temporary residents to connect to permanent community institutions?

**Rapid-Growth Exurban** communities are experiencing rapid growth due to their close proximity to large metropolitan areas. These rural communities become “bedroom” communities for the large metropolitan area. The culture of the

communities that are enveloped by the rapid growth is a mix of urban and rural cultures. At times, the mix of cultures causes clashes between the old and new residents of these communities. The new residents have little community loyalty evidenced by commute to town to work, to shop, to play and often to attend a larger city church.

Social arrangements are shifted. The Gemeinschaft characteristics of informal social arrangements fade away and the social arrangements become more contractual and role specific as are characteristic of the Gesellschaft type (Tönnies & Harris, 2001).

Economically, these areas are expanding and creating service oriented jobs, which bring more people into the communities. The local governments have difficulties meeting the infrastructure demand which often leads to clashes about funding for new projects. The economic base often changes in these places. The farming decreases as land is converted to housing and the dominant economic driver becomes the service sector. The economic growth brings jobs and new people to fill those jobs, who are more ethnically diverse than the current population.

Rapid-Growth Exurban describes my home town. I lived on a farm in a county adjacent to Charlotte, North Carolina. I have witnessed the changes in this type of community and church. My home church had many farmers. As the county changed to exurban, the crop fields and cow pastures were converted into retail sites and housing developments. Consequently, my home church had to shift to a consumer-based, market-driven style church. For example the church has recently built a recreation facility to attract new families.

In addition, several ethnic churches were started in the community in order to reach the new ethnic populations moving in to the area. There is a well-established Korean church, Slavic church, and various ministry efforts to reach out to other ethnic groups.

Many times, churches in the urban places outgrow facilities or the demographic makeup of the community in which they are physically located changes. They find cheaper land outside the city and build a new facility. The new facility is usually closer to the current members because they too have fled the downtown urban places.

**Rural and Remote** communities are far from metropolitan centers. They are generally losing population due to out-migration of young adults to urban places for jobs. The number of agricultural industry jobs is being reduced by the mechanization in the industry. Without local jobs, the population declines and the tax base decreases which leads to a reduction in services.

There is not much diversity in these communities. The local long-time residents are historically from the same ethnic groups. Examples are the Dutch in the upper Midwest, and the Germans in the Midwest. Those ties create a strong tight-knit community. However, poor economic conditions are not as prominent in these communities.

The rural and remote, declining population is the type Van Biema (2009) addresses in his article *Rural Churches Grapple with a Pastor Exodus*. The low density population results in small membership churches that cannot support full-time pastors.

The remoteness makes the driving time between churches hard for pastors holding multi-church charges.

The rural churches in these places have to be creative in being part of the culture. Technology may have an impact on reducing the geographic distance that separates people in these communities. For example, a church in Arkansas is promoting the use of satellite campuses. The local residents gather at the satellite campus and participate through live video conferencing. This church is of the evangelical type. Just as the Baptist and Methodist did in during the 1800's, they are adapting market driven technological approaches to meet the challenges of rural ministry.

**Persistent-Poverty** communities are places where jobs once provided by extractive industries or manufacturing are no longer available. Education levels are well below average and level of human capital is not attractive to businesses relocating to the area. Persistent poverty brings with it many other problems such as drug abuse, criminal activity and juvenile delinquency.

Many persistent poverty counties are found in the in Mississippi Delta/Black Belt, Appalachia, Indian Reservations in South Dakota, and along the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. Many of the areas noted are composed of ethnic minorities (except for Appalachia, which is mostly white). Rural persistent poverty is not homogenous.

Rural churches in these places face financial problems. During a recent evaluation for Together For Hope in Perry County, Alabama, I was surprised to discover that one of the issues the residents of the county identified as being problematic was the excessive number of small churches. None of them can support a full-time minister,

but they resist consolidation because of the family ties and historical connection to the church.

Persistent poverty is a need that churches can readily identify. Often prosperous churches are more likely to focus on these areas, even partnering with the local churches to assist them with ministry efforts. The rural churches in some of these areas function as the conduits for resources flowing into these areas. Partnerships are established with outside groups in order to provide resource and volunteers to do home repairs and other types of ministries to meet physical needs.

**Number of Churches in Rural America Today.** The Religious Congregations and Membership data for 1990 and 2000 (Jones & Glenmary Research, 2002) was merged with the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, Rural Continuum Codes (see table below for explanation of codes). This simple analysis provided the following data about the number of churches in each type of county. The 2000 United States census population was used to show the per capita church figure. The table below shows this information.

**Table 2. Church and Population Data for Each Rural Continuum Code**

Rural Code	# of Counties	Churches 1990	Churches 2000	% of Total Churches	Population 2000	% of Total Pop.	People per church
1	414	77,781	86,524	32.25	149,224,067	53.03	1,725
2	325	46,865	50,462	18.81	55,514,159	19.73	1,100
3	351	31,137	32,691	12.19	27,841,714	9.89	852
4	218	20,642	20,952	7.81	14,442,161	5.13	689
5	105	7,855	8,014	2.99	5,573,273	1.98	695
6	609	33,133	33,140	12.35	15,134,357	5.38	457
7	450	19,811	19,717	7.35	8,463,700	3.01	429
8	235	7,255	7,141	2.66	2,425,743	0.86	340
9	435	9,914	9,613	3.58	2,802,732	1.00	292

**Table 3. 2003 Rural-Urban Continuum Codes Descriptions**

Code	<b>Metro Counties</b>
1	Counties in metro areas of 1 million population or more
2	Counties in metro areas of 250,000 to 1 million population
3	Counties in metro areas of fewer than 250,000 population
<b>Non-Metro Counties</b>	
4	Urban population of 20,000 or more, adjacent to a metro area
5	Urban population of 20,000 or more, not adjacent to a metro area
6	Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, adjacent to a metro area
7	Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, not adjacent to a metro area
8	Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, adjacent to a metro area
9	Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, not adjacent to a metro area
(Parker)	

In counties with rural codes four, five and six, the number of churches increased between the years of 1990 to 2000. The opposite is true with rural codes seven, eight and nine, the number of churches decreased. However, the counties with rural codes seven, eight and nine still have the lowest church per capita rates of all the county types.

## **Study of Rural Clergy Preparation**

In March 2010, the United Methodist Rural Fellowship organization administered an electronic survey to congregations in rural communities. Surveys were mailed only to participants living in zip codes with a population density of less than 200 people per square mile. They sent 5,252 surveys via email and 946 were completed. The results were analyzed and synthesized by HunterKemper Consulting.

Regarding pastoral leadership, the participants expressed concern for the “lack of qualified pastoral leadership” and they “seek support to have trained, experienced pastors who have knowledge and understanding of the rural context” (HunterKemper, 2010, p. 2)

This report confirms that clergy with an understanding and knowledge of the rural context are desired. However, this report does not offer an insight into the current preparation of clergy for rural ministry. Even after 100 plus years since the Country Life Commission’s spawned the Rural Church Movement and the numerous efforts to prepare clergy for work in a rural context, work is still needed. This research will provide understanding and knowledge about current rural ministry preparation, but first an examination of previous research is needed.

**Goreham and Johnson 1997 Study.** Gary Goreham and Viki Johnson conducted the latest research to determine the status of rural clergy preparation programs. In 1995 a survey of 301 (with 234 responding) seminaries and Bible school in the United States and Canada was conducted to “determine the availability and types of

pastoral education programs for rural contexts” (Goreham & Johnson, 1997). The information from that survey was compiled with similar data collect in the fall of 1994 from course catalogs of American seminaries. The two data collection efforts yielded data on 183 seminaries and 51 Bible schools.

Goreham and Johnson reported their findings by developing typologies from the data to explain types of programs and types of courses being offered. The following is a summary of the findings:

- Eleven seminaries and one Bible school had a rural ministry education track or specialization.
- Forty-one seminaries and three Bible schools offered courses related to rural ministry with a total of eighty-two courses documented. Those courses were typologized into the following 6 types: General Ministry, Rural Context, Environmental and Ethical Concerns, Pastoral Care, Church Planting/Congregational Development and Other.
- Forty seminaries and two Bible schools offered rural ministry internships that fell into the following types: placements by seminary, placement into seminary programs, placement by or in religious organizations, placements by denominations and individual responsibility for placement.
- Thirty nine seminaries and six Bible schools offered rural ministry continuing education programs. Those types include: workshops and classes, on-campus activities, parish-based activities and other.

Goreham and Johnson (1997) helps inform this research by providing an inventory of programs in each category. The methodology section of this paper discusses how the programs for this research were selected based on the Goreham and Johnson (1997) research.

**Rockwell C. Smith.** Rockwell C. Smith (1969) published the results of research which better defined the role rural social science played in theological education. More specifically, he wanted to know, “does a rural pastor who possesses social science knowledge do measurably better work in his church and community than one who has no formal knowledge” (Smith, 1969, p. Preface)?

Smith designed a research study to empirically test for evidence to answer the question. The first step was to establish what rural social science concepts were important for a rural pastor to know. To accomplish this, Smith compiled concepts from “49 current text books and the five most recent volumes of Rural Sociology” (Smith, 1969, p. 28). He sent 343 questionnaires to members of the Rural Sociological Society asking them to indicate which sociological concepts would be the most important for a rural pastor to understand. Of the 343 questionnaires sent, 204 questionnaires were returned. The top 10 sociological concepts identified as most important for rural pastors to know were:

- Norms and Values
- Community
- Power Structure

- Community Decision Making
- Communication
- Role
- Socialization
- Culture
- Interaction
- Status

The next step was to design a questionnaire to test the sociological knowledge of rural pastors using these concepts identified as most important. Each of the terms listed above was “defined in four ways one of which reflected a sociological stance.” (Smith, 1969, p. 41). Smith wanted to determine if the pastors were “sociological in their outlook or not.” (1969, p. 41). A panel of professional rural sociologists examined the survey questionnaire, and then Smith administered it to two control groups to establish its reliability and validity. The questionnaire measured what it was designed to measure and was mailed to 852 pastors with 330 returned in a usable form.

Smith used previous research to determine pastoral performance in church and community. These performance measurements were divided into two areas: ecclesiastical maintenance and community outreach. The four measures of ecclesiastical maintenance are:

- Rate of Accessions: Measures the number of people received into the church.

- Rate of Evangelism: Measures the total number of received into the church on a profession of faith.
- Rate of Educational Efficiency: Measures the number of people in average attendance in Sunday School
- Per capita giving: Measures the total giving for all purposes per member.

The four measures of community outreach are:

- Rate of Community Leadership: Measures the number of community leadership positions held by members
- Rate of Community Sponsorship: Measures the number of community projects sponsored by the church.
- Rate of Ministerial Participation: Measures the number of community activities where the minister exercised a ministerial function.
- Rate of Financial Support: Measures the number of community projects given financial support by the churches.

Smith compared the results of the 330 returned questionnaires with the data on the measurement of pastor effectiveness as measured by the above indices. He applied statistical tools to the data and determined there was “a real relationship between sociological sophistication and pastoral performance of a higher than chance order.”

(Smith, 1969, p. 48)

Four of the effectiveness indices showed a difference in the distribution “so large that we cannot justify the null hypothesis that no relationship exists between scores

achieved on the sociological concepts test and these four measures of pastoral performance.” (Smith, 1969, p. 45). Those four indices were:

- Rate of Accessions: Measures the number of people received into the church.
- Per capita giving: Measures the total giving for all purposes per member.
- Rate of Community Leadership: Measures the number of community leadership positions held by members
- Rate of Community Sponsorship: Measures the number of community projects sponsored by the church.

Additionally, Rate of Ministerial Participation, which measures the number of community activities at which the minister exercised a ministerial function, was just above the 5% but “considerably less” than 10%.

Smith also sought to explore what role seminaries should play in training clergy for the rural context. Over a six month period, he interviewed 102 professional personnel in 19 state universities and 21 professional personnel in 8 church-related institutions and 3 in the United States Department of Agriculture, totaling 126 professional personnel.

The two questions he asked were:

- What does rural social science have to contribute to the pastor at work in a rural community?

- What is the role of the theological seminary in making these contributions available?

The responses from the first question generated a list of contributions of rural social science to a rural pastor. The list was similar to the list compiled from the survey of 204 rural sociologists. Responses included:

- Community Survey
- Social Change
- Community Action
- Community Sub-group Interaction
- Power Structure
- Values
- Leadership
- Demography
- Stratification
- Broad General Knowledge of Society and Culture

The next question examined the role of theological seminaries and generated the following list of top ten often mentioned functions of seminaries in relation to rural social science education.

- Supplementing college training in social science
- Applying rural social science to church problems
- Continuing education for graduates

- Interpreting sociology in ethical and theological categories
- Broadening minister's concept of his role
- Supervising field experience
- Relating to an adjacent university
- Understanding social change as constant
- How to integrate ministry in community
- Developing awareness of social resources available

Smith offered six guidelines for "every seminary's consideration" when it comes to its role in preparing clergy for rural ministry.

- Social science sophistication wherever and however gained is positively related to measures of success in the rural pastorate and outreach on the part of the church in service to the town and country community.
- A seminary faculty needs at least one member trained in social science who will not only educate students but share the growing understanding of man-in-community with his faculty colleagues.
- The rural pastor operates in a field of social forces of which his church is only a part. The seminary must familiarize him with the properties of that field so that his activities as a professional religious leader take those properties into account and utilize them as resources.

- The seminary has responsibility for establishing and maintaining a dialogue both with institutions preparing other professionals for work in the rural field and with social scientists whose job it is to study and observe that field.
- The seminary should seek feedback from its alumni in town and country, from church officials serving there, and from other dwellers in town and country both to evaluate and restructure its own program as the times suggest and to pass on researchable issues and problems to research agencies in rural sociology departments.
- Within the limits of its resources the seminary should provide library helps and personnel to carry on continuing education in the town and country ministry; in this connection liaison and cooperation with continuing education departments and programs in the state colleges is a real possibility.

The Smith (1969) study suggests that sociological knowledge does have a positive impact on rural clergy. These recommendations and list of concepts will prove to be helpful in the analysis of current programs seeking to prepare clergy for rural ministry.

### **The Theoretical Framework**

A curriculum inquiry is needed to passively examine the preparation of clergy to work in a rural context. Finch and Crunkilton (1979) have a definition of curriculum that will guide this research. They state, “the curriculum includes courses and experiences

associated with preparation for life and for earning a living” (Finch & Crunkilton, 1979). Finch and Crunkilton also provide a definition of curriculum material that informs this research. Finch and Crunkilton define curriculum materials as “tangible resources used by the teacher and/or students that can assist a teacher in bringing about the intended desirable behavior change in individual students” (Finch & Crunkilton, 1979 P 206). They also divide the curriculum materials into 3 categories: printed, audiovisual materials and manipulative aids (Finch & Crunkilton, 1979).

In this research, twenty courses from five organizations form the curriculum set to be examined. The information on the syllabi and the curriculum materials used for the courses will provide the data for the analysis. The curriculum materials consist of printed materials such as books and journal articles, and audiovisual materials such as films.

A curriculum inquiry is done for varied reasons. It can determine implementation of curriculum guidelines, ascertain sufficient coverage of subject matter, and explore what is being taught and how it is being taught. Along with the variety of reasons for doing curriculum inquiry, there are a variety of methods and tools used in curriculum inquiry, including surveying faculty or students, analysis of test results, and classification systems.

The book, *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (Anderson et al., 2001) describes a method or tool used in classifying educational objectives. The classification system is a two

dimensional and includes a taxonomic system of assigning cognitive processes and knowledge types to educational objectives.

The cognitive dimension includes the following processes in the taxonomy:

- Remember: Retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory
- Understand: Construct meaning from instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication.
- Apply: Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation
- Analyze: Break material into its constituent parts and determine how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose
- Evaluate: Make judgments based on criteria and standards
- Create: Put elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganize elements into a new pattern or structure (Anderson et al., 2001, pp. 67 -68)

The knowledge dimension includes the following types of knowledge:

- Factual Knowledge: Factual Knowledge encompasses the basic elements that experts use in communicating about their academic discipline, understanding it, and organizing it systematically. These elements are usually serviceable to people who work in the discipline in the very form in which they are presented; they need little or no alteration from one use or application to another. Factual knowledge contains the basic elements

students must know if they are to be acquainted with the discipline or to solve any of the problems in it.

- **Conceptual Knowledge:** Conceptual knowledge includes knowledge or categories and classifications and the relationships between and among them—more complex, organized knowledge forms. Conceptual knowledge includes schemas, mental models, or implicit or explicit theories in different cognitive psychological models... This type of conceptual knowledge might be one aspect of what is termed “disciplinary knowledge,” or the way experts in the discipline think about a phenomenon.
- **Procedural knowledge:** Procedural knowledge is the “knowledge of how” to do something. The “something” might range from completing fairly routine exercises to solving novel problems. Procedural knowledge often takes the form of a series or sequence of steps to be followed. It includes knowledge of skills, algorithms, techniques and methods, collectively known as procedures. Procedural knowledge also includes knowledge of the criteria used to determine when to use various procedures.
- **Metacognitive Knowledge:** Metacognitive knowledge is knowledge about cognition in general as well as awareness of and knowledge about one’s own cognition. One of the hallmarks of theory and research on learning since the publication of the original Handbook is the emphasis on making students

more aware of and responsible for their own knowledge and thought.

(Anderson et al., 2001, pp. 45-55)

Anderson et al. (2001) provides examples of how to apply the taxonomy to analyze curriculum or even comprehensive educational programs. However, these examples are not applicable to this research because this research involves examining the course description, goals and objectives to determine the general intent and purpose of the course in regards to the rural ministry preparation. The themes that emerged in the typology included language about types of knowledge, so the knowledge types described above were used to support and enhance the typology. (See Chapter 4)

**Curriculum Inquiry Examples.** Though the examples in Anderson et al. (2001) did not inform this research, the following examples of curriculum inquiries shaped various aspects of this research.

**Crittenden and Wilson (2005)** researched international marketing programs. Crittenden and Wilson (2005) used an effective method to capture information about courses dealing with international marketing. They examined the impact of adding an international marketing requirement to the accreditation standards for marketing programs. A curriculum guideline was not established, but a marketing program had to offer international content in their courses in order to be accredited.

Crittenden and Wilson's (2005) used content analysis to analyze 89 syllabi collected from colleges and universities throughout the world. They analyzed the syllabi for content, pedagogy, and learning objectives. They created a typology for each item and reported the results regionally.

Their process of creating the typologies for content, pedagogy and learning objectives is a good example of how creating typologies help describe and analyze the content in the curriculum. As the analysis of the data progresses, typologies will be formed to help understand and describe rural clergy preparation.

Edward Kain (2007) conducted research on the implementation of recommendations made in the Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major (American Sociological & Association of American, 1991). Kain used course catalogs instead of syllabi as Crittenden and Wilson (2005). Kain (2007) created a purposive sample from selecting the top 10 colleges in the 10 categories of the 2000 U.S. News and World Report. By analyzing the content of the catalogs Kain (2007) made inferences about the implementation of the recommendation across different variables. The list of recommendations in the Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major served as his framework for analysis.

Looking for evidence of implementation of recommendations located in Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major in the best college programs is similar to the selection process use to choose the organizations included in this research. Maximizing variation was important, but choosing robust programs was also a consideration.

**Cashwell and Young** (2004) used syllabi from counselor training classes to determine the inclusion of spirituality in course work. Cashwell and Young used nine competencies developed at the Summit on Spirituality in 1995. They reported on course objectives, course topics, classroom activities, assignments, and reading assignments. From the reading assignments, they compiled a bibliography of resources

used. The researchers also offered a compiled list of resources to orient readers to each of the nine competencies.

Cashwell and Young (2004) provide another example using syllabi to conduct curriculum inquiry. However, the list of resources and a bibliography form the materials used in the courses provided an example of an analytical outcome to include in this research.

### **Analytical Frameworks**

The analytical frame work used in this research will be a qualitative content analysis of the course syllabi and curriculum material. Previous research concerning preparing clergy for work in a rural context has been empirical in nature. The Goreham and Johnson (1997) research contributed the typology of training programs which helped diversify the purposive sample. Smith (1969) provided the credibility to the idea of sociological knowledge positively impacts rural clergy and their ministries. Curriculum inquiry research provides understanding about information that can be gained from curriculum inquiries and the approaches to obtain the information.

These three areas inform the research, but the exploratory nature of this inquiry requires an analytical method that allows understanding and knowledge to develop through the research process. Chapter three describes the methodology used to discover information about the preparation of clergy to work in a rural context.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter will describe the methodology used for the purpose of describing up-to-date, in-depth and sociologically informed, knowledge and understanding about the current educational preparation of clergy to work in a rural context. The method of analysis used in this research is best described as a qualitative content analysis. A qualitative content analysis is a method of “data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (Patton & Patton, 2002, p. 453).

During the analysis, Charmaz’s (2006) reflexivity approach to qualitative research and being flexible with structure was employed to create the best typologies of the themes that emerged from the data. The final stage of the research will be a discussion of the “lessons-learned” as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The lessons learned are discussed in Chapter 6.

This begins with a description of the researcher. I will describe my background and my approach to this research. Secondly, a detailed account is given of how the organizations were selected to provide the syllabi for this research. Then, the collection of the data is discussed, which includes how the course materials were managed. The coding and analysis methodology is discussed in general and then aspects of the methodology used for the analysis of the course syllabi and the course content materials will be described. The next section of the chapter discusses the

trustworthiness of the research. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the limitations of the study.

### **Locating Myself in the Research**

Locating the researcher within the research is important. In qualitative research, this is especially important because the researcher “is the instrument” (Morse & Richards, 2002). Wildemuth states that the researcher’s “knowledge and experience have significant impact on the credibility of research results” (2009, p. 315).

Since this research is concerned with clergy preparation, it is important for readers to know I am a clergyperson who has successfully completed theological training. I completed 90 credit hours in theological studies and have a Master of Divinity degree. I have been a Pastor of rural churches in North Carolina and Missouri since 2002. Before becoming a pastor, I worked with two denominational organizations for four years. Through my ministry and my work experience, I have gained considerable knowledge about church roles and functions in our society, particularly the role of churches in rural communities.

The other aspect about the research to be addressed is my identity. I consider myself to be rural identified. My great grandfather farmed, my grandfather farmed, my father farmed and I farmed until I left for college at the age of eighteen. My father’s wisdom steered me away from continuing the family profession. He recognized in the 1980’s that commodity farming near Charlotte, North Carolina was in jeopardy due the urban sprawl extending from Charlotte.

Thankfully, my grandfather and father were able to continue farming through my formative years. Those years of living with the uncertainty of the harvest, tilling the soil, and learning in nature's laboratory forever connected me to the land. The lessons of hard work, thrift, and "making do with what you have" created within me resourcefulness. It was this resourcefulness that compelled me to learn more about helping rural communities. As a pastor, I could not "make do with what I had" because I did not have all the tools I needed to understand the issues.

In seeking the needed tools, I turned to doctoral education in rural sociology and community development. Through the learning experience of this program, I have learned much about myself. For example, I have learned that living in and working in a rural culture also impacts the way I learn. Through this research, I gained more insight into this topic by reading *Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will Rogers, Uncle Remus, and Minnie Pearl* by Tex Sample (1994). I read a passage in Sample (1994) that deeply resonated with me. Here is what Sample wrote about his transition into the academic world from an oral culture:

"My world was not one of discourse, systematic coherence, the consistent use of clear definitions, and the writing of discursive prose that could withstand the whipsaws of academic critique. Rather, it was a world made sense of through proverbs, stories, and relationships. A great deal of what we knew was tacitly understood: We often knew a lot that we could not put into words (because we didn't have the right words) but that we nevertheless knew how to do. We knew things we couldn't say, we felt things we couldn't name, and we did things we couldn't explain. So proverbs and stories helped us. They pointed to what we meant. No, actually, they were what we meant. If they lacked Socratic exactitude, they more than made up for it with color, hyperbole, metaphoric range, and their often earthy and concrete lack of polite taste" (Sample, 1994, p. 3)

Learning for me has always meant handling the tool, manipulating the machine, tinkering with the parts. Knowledge in my native oral cultural was shared through the stories about the neighbor's experience with a health problem or Uncle Pete's experience with the new variety of tomato plant. It was through tacit learning and those shared stories and experiences that we made our way through life. We learned together, through relationships, mentorships, and apprenticeships.

This doctoral education process has given me the language to express what I tacitly know about rural life and to explain the larger implications and reasons clergy preparing for rural ministry need to know it. Furthermore, my foray into post-graduate education has forced me to communicate what I know and have learned through my writing.

What I discovered in this qualitative content analysis is that written words are important. They communicate the author's knowledge and experience beyond the time a spoken word could. The written word communicates beyond the moment and impacts those that are not around to hear the words spoken.

Written words have been extremely important for the purposes of this research. The words printed on the syllabi became my windows into these educator's knowledge and experience. It was my job to decode the knowledge they intended to communicate to the student receiving their instruction. I did not have the luxury to learn from their presentation of the material. I had the "relics" of their knowledge and understanding found in the words written on a syllabus.

Qualitative content analysis was the tool that I used to find the knowledge “hidden” in those syllabi and materials the educators used to prepare clergy for work in a rural context. However, this tool was different than those I encounter on the farm. Qualitative content analysis is a tool of the mind used to discover knowledge and gain understanding in a manner that the researcher can legitimately demonstrate and explain how he/she arrived at their conclusions.

This was my first attempt at using this new tool. I am in total agreement with Morse and Richards (2002) when they state,

“Methods are continuously being refined and improved, and learning methods is an art that does not stop with the completion of the first project. Learning new methods, developing strategies, improving techniques, and developing skills as an observer, an interviewer, and as an analyst are lifelong commitments”(p 169).

### **Context of Study**

Previous quantitative research has been conducted showing that educational opportunities exist for clergy seeking to work in a rural context. The quantitative research performed by Goreham and Johnson (1997) provided an inventory of rural clergy preparation programs in the United States and Canada. They typologized the courses and programs to report the status of the rural clergy training programs.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Rockwell Smith (1969) sought to empirically measure the role rural social science knowledge played in the performance of rural pastors. Smith (1969) also suggested ways seminaries could provide the rural social science training for rural pastors.

A qualitative content analysis of twenty syllabi was conducted to provide knowledge and understanding of the general intent and purpose of courses, as well as content found in the subjects, activities, textbooks, films and other materials used to convey information for rural clergy preparation. The qualitative analysis produced three products which advances the knowledge and understanding of rural clergy preparation. The first product is a typology describing the general intent and purposes of the courses being offered (Chapter 4). The second product is the seven course content themes that describe content used to educate clergy for rural ministry (Chapter 5). The final product is a bibliography of the books, articles, publications and films used to educate clergy for work in a rural context as found in the twenty syllabi submitted for this research. (See Appendix A. Textbooks and Films Bibliography)

### **Purposive Sample of Programs/Organizations**

A purposive sample of programs and organization was compiled with the goal of maximizing the variation (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of excellent programs for training clergy to serve in a rural context. Establishing a frame from which to purposively select the programs and organizations involved a conversation with members of the Rural Church Network, the Goreham and Johnson (1997) study, and web searches of rural ministry training opportunities.

**Establishing the Frame.** The frame for this research consists of educational programs or organizations preparing clergy to serve in a rural context in the United States of America. A current list of organizations preparing clergy for work in a rural

context does not exist. Three sources were used to compile the frame for this research. The first was a list of programs and organizations doing rural ministry preparation compiled as a result of a meeting with members of the Rural Church Network in April 2010. The second source is the programs and organizations listed in Goreham and Johnson (1997). The third source is a web search seeking rural ministry training programs and organizations.

***Rural Church Network.*** The Rural Church Network is composed of academic researchers, theological educators, clergy, and denominational leaders. The membership is open to any person or interested in rural church concerns. Members pay annual dues.

Their purpose as stated in their by-laws is:

“The purpose of the organization is to be a forum for sharing among denominational leaders and other town and rural strategic partners working for wholeness and health of rural communities. In carrying out this purpose the RCN shall:

A. Develop/share strategies for ministry in town and rural areas through linkages with groups such as ecumenical organizations, regional groups, agencies, non-governmental organizations, foundations, overseas churches, organizations, and educational institutions;

B. Develop/discover resources for ministry in areas of interest including evangelism, clergy and lay leadership, contextual training for ministry, church development (new church development, church re-development, and congregational revitalization), community economic development, and town and rural research” (Ruesink, 2010b, p. 2).

Soliciting this group for information concerning this research fell within the purpose statement and they were glad to help. In a meeting on April 19, 2010, I asked those in attendance to identify programs that train clergy for service in rural contexts.

The people in attendance included Dr. Bernie Evans, Dr. Alvin Luedke, Angela Herrmann, Reverend Christine Iverson, Dr. Mark Jackel-Juleen, Dr. L. Shannon Jung, Reverend Ron Lammert, Dr. Lon Oliver, Dr. Dave Ruesink, and Kenny Sherin (Ruesink, 2010a). Below is a brief description of the role these members have outside of the Rural Church Network.

- Dr. Bernie Evans is the Virgil Michel Ecumenical Chair in Rural Social Ministries Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at Saint John's School of Theology, in Collegeville, Minnesota.
- Dr. Alvin Luedke, is Professor of Rural Ministry, at Luther Seminary, in Saint Paul, Minnesota. His doctorate is in sociology with special emphasis on rural sociology from Texas A&M University.
- Angela Herrmann is the Coordinator for Environmental Education and Advocacy for the Disciples Home Mission of the Christian Church.
- Pastor Christine Iverson, is the pastor of two Lutheran churches in Halstad, Minnesota
- Dr. Mark Jackel-Juleen, is the Director of Shalom Hill Farm, a continuing education and retreat center.
- Dr. L. Shannon Jung is the Franklin and Louise Cole Professor of Town and Country Ministries at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri.
- Reverend Ron Lammert, is a pastor of a rural church in Minnesota
- Dr. Lon Oliver, is the Executive Director of Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center.

- Dr. Dave Ruesink is the executive secretary of the Rural Church Network. He is also Professor Emeritus of Rural Sociology in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University.

From the notes of our conversation, a list was created of the organizations and programs the RCN members mentioned.

***Goreham and Johnson Study.*** Goreham and Johnson conducted the latest research to determine the status of rural clergy preparation programs. In 1995 a survey of 301 (with 234 responding) seminaries and Bible schools in the United States and Canada was conducted to “determine the availability and types of pastoral education programs for rural contexts” (Goreham & Johnson, 1997). The information from that survey was compiled with similar data collected in the fall of 1994 from course catalogs of American seminaries. The two data collection efforts yielded data on 183 seminaries and 51 Bible schools.

Goreham and Johnson (1997) created a typology for the rural ministry training organizations in order to better describe the models of preparing clergy for the rural context. Below is a brief description of the Goreham and Johnson typology.

#### **Rural Ministry Track/Specialized Program**

These programs and organizations offer a full slate of courses and field experiences that prepare clergy for ministry in a rural context. Goreham and Johnson (1997) identified twelve programs that meet their criteria for this type.

#### **Consortium or Cooperation with Other Seminaries**

Consortium or Cooperation with Other Seminaries type, describes institutions combining efforts to offer rural ministry training. Cooperative relationships between educational institutions define this type. Goreham and Johnson (1997) named the Minnesota Consortium of Theological School's Northland Ministry Partnership, the Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center (AMERC) and Wartburg Theological Seminary.

### **One or More Courses**

Other institutions have one or more courses pertaining to rural ministry as part of a degree program. Goreham and Johnson (1997) identified forty-one seminaries that offer one or more courses in rural ministry training. The eighty two courses were typologized into the following categories: General Ministry, Rural Context, Environmental and Ethical Concerns, Pastoral Care, Church Planting/Congregational Development and Other.

### **Field Experiences**

Field experiences place students in the context in which they are learning. In this case, clergy in training programs visit rural communities, churches, and farms in order to gain a better understanding of the context in which they desire to serve as clergy. In some cases, the clergy person serves as an intern in a rural church for extended exposure to the rural context. When field experiences appear in the selected programs, they will be analyzed.

### **Continuing Education/Extension Programs**

The continuing education/extension programs typically are designed to provide theological education to clergy serving in a rural context. An analysis of these programs would involve a study of distance education, which is beyond the scope of this research. This research is concerned with curriculum for preparing clergy to serve in a rural context.

### **Advanced Training**

Advance training is offered at institutions granting Doctorate of Ministry (D.Min) degrees in rural ministry. Doctorate of Ministry studies are used to enhance the practice of ministry for persons who have a master's degree and have engaged in ministerial leadership ("Standards of Accreditation," 2010). No program could be identified to meet this type.

***Web Searches.*** As a way to verify the viability of the programs and organizations mentioned by the members of the Rural Church Network and to check on the status of the programs and organizations found in Goreham and Johnson (1997), web searches were done. This created a triangulation as described in Miles and Huberman (1994) in the selection process. In addition to using the web searches to triangulate the information provided by the Rural Church Network and the Goreham and Johnson study, other web searches led to two additional organizations in the purposive sample.

**Selection of Programs and Organizations.** Although the research objective does not include comparing programs and organizations or types of programs, using

Goreham and Johnson (1997) types helped insure greater variability in the selected sample.

Two groups of schools represented the Consortium or Cooperation with Other Seminaries type found in Goreham and Johnson (1997). The Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center (AMERC) and the organizations of Minnesota Consortium of Theological School's Northland Ministry Partnership, which are Luther Theological Seminary, United Theological Seminary of Twin Cities, The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity, Saint John's University School of Theology, and Bethel Theological Seminary, were included in the sample set.

Goreham and Johnson (1997) reported twelve organizations in the Rural Ministry Track/Specialized Program type. The list below does not include the organizations which are part of the Minnesota Consortium of Theological School's Northland Ministry Partnership.

- Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa
- Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan
- Oak Hills Bible College, Rochester, Minnesota
- Saint Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, Missouri
- Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Delaware, Ohio
- Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
- Emmanuel School of Religion, Johnson City, Tennessee
- Vancouver School of Theology, Vancouver, British Columbia

Web searches were done on the remaining organizations to help choose the best representative of the Rural Ministry Track/Specialized Program. A search in the online academic catalogs of Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, and Emmanuel School of Religion confirm that these organizations no longer offered a track or specialized ministry for rural clergy. The Vancouver School of Theology (out of United States) and the Oak Hills Bible College (not graduate education) fall outside the frame of this research. These were eliminated as possible organizations to be included in this research.

Wartburg Theological Seminary, Lutheran Theological Seminary and Saint Paul School of Theology remained from the twelve that Goreham and Johnson (1997) identified. From these three, the Wartburg Theological Seminary offered the best example of the Rural Ministry Track/Specialized Program.

In addition to the Wartburg Theological Seminary's Center for Theology and Land, Duke Divinity School's Thriving Rural Communities program was identified during the meeting with the member of the Rural Church Network. Duke's program was multifaceted and offered an excellent example of the Rural Ministry Track/Specialized Program so it was selected for the sample.

Through information gleaned from extensive web searches on rural ministry training, two other organizations were identified that provide variation in the sample. These organizations were not part of a formal educational institution, thus they fail to appear in Goreham and Johnson (1997). They were also not mentioned by members of the Rural Church Network. These organizations were: the Rural Home Missionary

Association, Town and Country Training and TheSticks.tv Organization. Both of these organizations were evangelical in nature, which was in contrast to the mainline organizations represented in the rest of the sample set.

The considerations outlined above have resulted in a purposeful sample designed to include the maximum variation (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of excellent programs for training clergy to serve in a rural context. Therefore, the following nine programs/organizations were asked to provide syllabi for this research:

- Duke Divinity School, Thriving Rural Communities, Durham, North Carolina
- Wartburg Theological Seminary, Center for Land and Theology, Dubuque, Iowa
- Rural Home Missionary Association, Town and Country Training, Morton, Illinois
- TheSticks.tv Organization, Orangeburg, South Carolina
- Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center (AMERC), Berea, Kentucky
- Minnesota Consortium of Theological Schools, Northland Ministries Partnership
  - Luther Theological Seminary, Saint Paul, Minnesota
  - United Theological Seminary of Twin Cities, New Brighton, Minnesota
  - The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity, Saint Paul, Minnesota
  - Saint John's University School of Theology, Collegeville, Minnesota
  - Bethel Theological Seminary (No contact person could be identified therefore, Bethel Seminary was not asked to supply materials)

## Data Collection

On May 23, 2011, an email was sent to thirty-six representatives of the nine programs/organizations listed above requesting syllabi of courses focused on, or including a section designed, to prepare for rural ministry, lists of resources recommended to rural clergy and/or other course or workshop materials (including audio or video) used to convey knowledge to clergy preparing for ministry in a rural context. The date of June 30, 2011 was given as a “respond by date.” A follow-up email was sent August 8, 2011 as a reminder and to let the representatives know their information could be received as late as September 30, 2011.

Of the nine organizations contacted, five organizations responded by sending twenty syllabi. Duke Divinity School (Duke) submitted two syllabi used in their *Thriving Rural Communities* program. Wartburg Theological Seminary (Wartburg) submitted six syllabi used in their *Center for Theology and Land* program. The Rural Home Missionary Association, Town and Country Training (TACT) sent five syllabi used in the *Town and Country Training* program. Luther Seminary (Luther) submitted six syllabi and Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity (St Paul) provided one syllabus.

There were no syllabi submitted from United Theological Seminary of Twin Cities, Saint John’s University School of Theology, or the Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center. The Sticks.tv organization does not offer formal educational courses, (only workshops) so no syllabi were submitted from Sticks.tv. Other materials were submitted, however the syllabi provided the best data in to

examine the preparation of clergy for work in a rural context. Therefore, the twenty syllabi were collected and sorted in preparation for the data analysis.

The following of is a list of twenty syllabi received:

**Duke Divinity School (United Methodist Church)**

- Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church, Spring 2011, W. Joseph Mann—3 pages, 7 textbooks, Full Semester, A Professional Skills Development Course (Mann, Spring 2011)
- Agrarian Theology for an Urban World, Spring 2010, Norman Wirzba—3 pages, 7 textbooks, Full Semester, An Issue Specific Course (Wirzba, Spring 2010)

**Wartburg Seminary (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America)**

- Rural Plunge Weekend, Fall 2010, Ann Fritschel—2 pages, 6 textbooks Intensive Weekend, A Contextual Course (Fritschel, Fall 2010)
- Ministry in Rural Context, No Date, Ann Fritschel—3 pages, 6 textbooks Intensive Four Weeks, A Contextual Course (Fritschel)
- Rural J-Term 2011, Ann Fritschel—4 pages, 13 textbooks Intensive January Term, A Contextual Course (Fritschel, 2011b)
- Issues in Rural Ministry—Immigration, No Date, Ann Fritschel—2 pages, 4 textbooks Intensive Four Weeks, An Issue Specific Course (Fritschel, 2011a)

- Exploring Contemporary Rural Issues Through Film—Economic Displacement, No Date, Ann Fritschel—2 pages, 1 textbook Intensive Four Weeks, An Issue Specific Course (Fritschel)
- Theology of Eating: A Course in Rural Ministry and Constructive Theology, No Date, Ann Fritschel—2 pages, 5 textbooks Full Semester, An Issue Specific Course (Fritschel)

#### **TACT/Rural Home Missionary Association (Evangelical)**

- Pastoral Care in the Town and Country Context, No Date, Ron Klassen—3 pages, 5 textbooks Intensive One Week, A Professional Skills Development Course (Klassen)
- Leading the Town and Country Church, No Date, Ron Klassen—3 pages, 5 textbooks Intensive One Week, A Professional Skills Development course (Klassen)
- Faith Communication in the Town and Country Context, Barney Wells—4 pages, 5 textbooks Intensive One Week, A Professional Skills Development course (Wells)
- Ministering in the Town and Country Church, Ron Klassen—4 pages, 4 textbooks Intensive One Week, A Contextual Course (Klassen)
- Seminar in Town and Country Ministry, Ron Klassen—4 pages 1500 pages required Intensive One Week, An Issue Specific Course (Klassen)

#### **Luther Seminary (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America)**

- Changing Demographics and Economics of Rural Communities, Spring 2007, Alvin Luedke—4 pages, 8 textbooks Full Semester, A Contextual Course (Luedke, Spring 2007)
- Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry, Fall 2010, Alvin Luedke—4 pages, 7 textbooks Full Semester, A Contextual Course (Luedke, Fall 2010)
- Exploring Town and Country Ministry: New Challenges for Pastoral Ministry, Fall 2009 Alvin Luedke—5 pages, 6 textbooks Full Semester, A Contextual Course (Luedke)
- Leadership for Hope in Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministries, Spring 2010, Alvin Luedke—4 pages, 5 textbooks Eight Week Quarter, A Professional Skills Development Course (Luedke, Spring 2010)
- Rural Church Organization, Fall 2008, Alvin Luedke—3 pages, 5 textbooks Eight Week Quarter, A Professional Skills Development Course (Luedke, Fall 2008)
- Rural Church Leadership, Spring 2011, Alvin Luedke—4 pages, 6 textbooks Eight Week Quarter, A Professional Skills Development Course (Luedke, Spring 2011)

**Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity (Roman Catholic)**

Rural Ministry/Practicum, January Term 2010 James F. Ennis, Facilitator—4 pages, 0 textbooks Intensive Five Days, A Contextual Course (Ennis, January Term 2010)

**Description of Organizations.** Five training organizations submitted a total of twenty syllabi for analysis. Duke contributed two, Wartburg submitted six, and TACT sent five. Luther Seminary responded with six syllabi and Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity contributed one. These organizations have robust programs for preparing clergy to serve in rural communities. Each of the program descriptions will include a brief history of the organization, denominational affiliation and characteristics of why the organization made for a good organization to request data from.

***Duke Divinity School.*** Duke Divinity School began in 1926 as one of the seminaries of the United Methodist Church. Duke Divinity School has a specialized program called Thriving Rural Communities, which trains clergy for serving in rural context. The goal of the program is, “The Thriving Rural Communities initiative works to share and strengthen the gifts of rural North Carolina’s clergy, congregations, communities, and creation in the name of Christ” (“Thriving Rural Communities | Duke Divinity School,” p. para. 1)

The Thriving Rural Communities initiative is a partnership of Duke Divinity School, The Duke Endowment, the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church and the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. While financial support in other places is decreasing for programs preparing clergy for rural ministry, the partners involved in the Thriving Rural Communities Initiative are providing a support for this great resource. This well supported endeavor makes this program appealing for this research.

The Thriving Rural Communities initiative at Duke Divinity involves more than course work. However, for the purposes of this study, only the two syllabi from the formal rural ministry preparation courses in the Duke Divinity School will be examined.

***Wartburg Theological Seminary.*** The Center for Theology and Land was established in 1987. The mission of the center is “to strengthen rural churches and their communities” (“Center for Theology and Land,” p. para. 1). They seek to “strengthen rural churches” by training ministers, providing continuing education for clergy and laity in rural settings, and empowering rural churches for mission in their communities. The program is sponsored by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Center for Theology and Land offers courses, field experiences, an annual rural ministry conference, luncheon seminars, and a certificate in town and country church leadership. The certificate program is administered through the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program. The TEEM program “provides alternative preparation for those who will provide pastoral ministry in emerging ministry contexts throughout the church. “These contexts include ethnic specific, multicultural, rural, inner city, and ministry with deaf communities” (“Center for Theology and Land,”)

Wartburg’s Center for Theology and Land has a diverse program and long history of preparing rural clergy. Their mature program which produced six syllabi makes it a good program to research.

***Rural Home Missionary Association, Town and Country Training Program.*** The Town and Country Training (TACT) program provided five class syllabi, which are posted on the Rural Home Missionary Association (RHMA) website. The TACT

program provides accredited classes for clergy serving or seeking to serve in rural and small-town ministry. RHMA issues a certificate when participants complete five classes of the TACT successfully. The TACT program also offers cultural immersion experiences as part of their training curriculum.

The RHMA, which began in 1942, seeks to fulfill its mission of strengthening churches in smaller town of 5,000 or less in size. In addition to TACT, RHMA conducts conferences for small-town pastors, presents workshops and seminars at pastors' gatherings, counsels with churches which seek our advice, have resources available that are beneficial to benefit the small-town pastor and church" ("Rural Home Missionary Association,") RHMA is an evangelical organization, which provides the only evangelical example of rural clergy preparation in this research.

***Luther Seminary.*** Luther Seminary is located in Saint Paul, Minnesota and is the largest of the eight seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). It traces its history back to Augsburg Seminary of the Norwegian-Danish Conference which was founded in 1896. Located in the upper Midwest, Dr. Alvin Luedke, Professor of Rural Ministry offers several classes for clergy headed for those small towns and rural places in the Midwest. Luther Seminary provided six syllabi for this research.

Luther Seminary is one of the members of The Minnesota Consortium of Theological School (MNCTS). These schools work together to expand their course offerings, including courses for rural ministry preparation. The Northland Ministries Partnership is the name given to the rural ministry emphasis of the consortium. The other four seminaries include:

- The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity
- United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities
- Bethel Seminary
- Saint John’s School of Theology Seminary

MNCTS provides the structure for cross-listing courses among the consortium members. Any student enrolled in any of the member schools can take MNCTS courses and have the course count for their degree program. Along with course offerings, MNCTS partners with Shalom Hill Farm to offer a rural immersion program. Shalom Hill Farm specializes in field education experiences in small town and rural culture, ministry and environment ("Minnesota Consortium of Theological Schools,").

***The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity.*** The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity, a member of MNCTS, responded by submitting one syllabus. The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity was started in 1987 is a Roman Catholic school located in Saint Paul, Minnesota ("University of St. Thomas : St. Paul Seminary - School of Divinity : Home,"). The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity is part of the University of St. Thomas. The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity provides their students with an immersion experience into a rural ministry setting in partnership with Shalom Hill Farm. This Roman Catholic organization increased the diversity of organizations includes in this research when the provided a syllabus to examine.

The organizations that submitted syllabi provided a diversity of denominational affiliations which include one United Methodist school, two Evangelical Luther Church of

America schools, one Roman Catholic school and one Evangelical organization. A diversity of course syllabi were submitted providing a robust data set for analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

The twenty syllabi and the curriculum material referenced on the syllabi provided the raw data for this research. A qualitative content analysis condensed the raw data into categories and themes based on valid inference and interpretation. Themes and categories emerged from the data through careful examination and constant comparison. (Patton, 2002).

**Preparing the Data.** The syllabi were received via email or downloaded from the organization's website. They were printed and grouped by the organization. The textbooks, films, readings and other materials referenced on the syllabi were entered into a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet had 127 entries without accounting for duplicate entries of the required textbooks, films, and other materials used as course material.

The textbooks were obtain through the university library and other required reading material was gathered via the internet and either captured or downloaded. Once the textbooks arrived from the library, summaries were written to capture the basic content and ideas that the books contained. A brief summary for each textbook was entered into the spreadsheet. Information about the author provided on the book cover or gathered from internet searches was also entered into the spreadsheet. This information was needed in order to achieve an understanding of the knowledge contained in these books and the overall intent of the book.

**Defining the Units of Analysis.** To help describe and understand the preparation of clergy to work in a rural context, a data set of twenty syllabi and the textbooks, films and other materials was compiled. An analysis of the course descriptions, goals and objectives was needed to help describe the general intent and purpose of training clergy for a rural context. As the data was being compiled, the course descriptions, goals and objectives specified in each syllabus provided information about the rationale for offering the course and the function the course would serve in clergy preparation. The results of this inquiry of the course descriptions, goals and objectives are found in Chapter 4.

Beyond the course descriptions, goals and objectives found in the syllabi, data related to the course outlines, required readings, films, and other materials was also analyzed. The information in the syllabi, required readings, films and other materials were compiled in order to create a large data set. The analysis of this data is found in Chapter 5.

**Coding Process.** The same coding process was used for the analysis in Chapter 4, Analysis of Course Syllabi, and Chapter 5 Analysis of Course Content. The data was analyzed without applying any existing theories about the preparation of clergy to work in a rural context. Therefore, an inductive open coding procedure was used with the raw data to discover the categories used in the coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Margin notations and notes made in a spreadsheet during the open coding process allowed information to be tracked and for categories of information to be formed.

Morse and Richards (2002) describe coding two ways. One is linking and the other fracturing. Linking in is like putting a chain together. The data leads to an idea and from that idea “to all the data pertaining to that idea” (Morse & Richards 2002, p. 115). Coding is also fracturing, or “breaking data up, and disaggregating records” (Morse & Richards 2002, p. 115). The fracturing of the data allowed me to see fragments of each syllabus rather than looking at the entire document. It was in looking at the fractured data from the twenty syllabi that I was able to find the course types and the content themes.

In the open coding process, collections of content and materials covering equivalent subjects, activities or other data were discovered. Morse uses the term topic coding to describe the process of, “identifying all material on a topic for later retrieval and description, categorization or reflection” (Morse & Richards 2002, p. 117). Therefore the word topic means more than a single subject. Topics indicate a collection of material representing equivalent subjects, activities or other data.

I used various methods to code the topics including highlighting, cutting and pasting text into table, and underlining. The topics were grouped into categories. Categories are a collection of similar or comparable topics. The categories in the data were identified, further defined through memo writing, and finally refined to the point where themes emerged. Morse and Richards (2002) define a theme as “a common thread that runs through the data” (p. 113). This definition accurately describes the themes found in this research process.

Coding for topics, categories and themes continued throughout the data analysis process. This is often referred to as the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Once preliminary categories and themes emerged from the coding of the data, a framework for organizing and describing these themes emerged into the typologies describe in Chapters 4 and 5. This describes in general the coding process; however, the coding process for both analyses will be further elaborated upon below.

***Coding for Chapter 4.*** In Chapter 4, Analysis of Course Syllabi, information emerged from the coding process of the course description, goals and objectives indicating some courses were meant to expose the students to rural life, rural culture, and/or provide a vocabulary to describe rural areas. Other courses seemed to focus on how to perform clerical duties in a rural context.

A table was created for each syllabus by cutting and pasting data fragments pulled from the course descriptions, goals and objectives. The fractured data in the tables was coded into topics, which then resulted in categories. Tables for each course were examined and as memo writing and reflection took place, themes emerged describing the general intent and purpose found in course used to prepare rural ministers. Those themes centered on concepts used to describe the types of knowledge the course sought to convey.

Through memo writing and reflection, related literature was discovered that helped to inform the analysis and enhance the description of the themes. For example, to provide a better description of the knowledge types found in the course description, goals and objectives, the knowledge types found in Bloom's revised taxonomy were

incorporated into the descriptions. The following are brief descriptions of Bloom's revised knowledge types:

**Factual Knowledge** – *The basic elements students must know to be acquainted with a discipline or solve problems in it.*

**Conceptual Knowledge** – *The interrelationships among the basic elements within a larger structure that enable them to function together.*

**Procedural Knowledge** – *How to do something, methods or inquiry, and criteria for using skills, algorithms, techniques, and methods.*

**Metacognitive Knowledge** – *Knowledge of cognition in general as well as awareness and knowledge of one's own cognition.* (Anderson et al., 2001, p. 46)

The coding and analytical process revealed that some courses focused on introducing students to rural life, describing rural areas using preexisting typologies, and showing films depicting rural living. Other courses taught methods and practical skills for working in a rural context as a clergy person.

Ultimately, three themes emerged describing the general intent and purposes of courses used to prepare clergy to work in a rural context. Those course type themes are: Contextual, Professional Skills Development for Rural Ministers, and Issue Specific. The Contextual course type aimed to provide information about the basic elements of rural life. The Contextual courses also used existing typologies of rural areas to inform the students of the various types of rural area and the typical social and economic situations found in those areas. Because these courses communicated facts and concepts about the rural context, they were deemed Contextual.

Two examples of data that was coded as a Contextual course type are below.

A Wartburg course, Ministry in Rural Context, listed its first objective as:

“The primary objective of this course is simply to encourage you to think about what it would mean to do ministry in a rural setting. The primary insight that will enable you to do great ministry is that the rural U.S., in spite of all its similarities to urban U.S., is still a different culture; each setting is different; and the pastor would do well to recognize that she or he needs to learn from the people there” (Fritschel, p. 1).

A TACT course, *Ministering in the Town and Country Church* included the following objectives in the syllabus, “to identify the types of town and country economies and their impact on the town and country church and its context. And, “to define “town and country” in both quantitative and qualitative ways” (Klassen, p. 1)

These examples of the course descriptions, goals and objectives were indicative of a Contextual course theme. A full description of the Contextual course theme and the other course type themes is found in Chapter 4.

***Coding for Chapter 5.*** Using the same coding procedures as describe above in relation to chapter 4, seven course content themes emerged from the data found in the course materials.

The diversity of material used to educate clergy about work in a rural context was great, which created a large data set. A line by line analysis of each textbook or article was unfeasible. Time did not allow for the reading all seventy-three books and articles and watching all sixteen films, therefore, a procedure was developed to help collect the necessary information about the reading material.

The bibliographic information was entered into a spreadsheet. The Library of Congress subject headings were gathered for each book and added to the spreadsheet. A summary of the biographic information about the authors was collected from either the book jacket or through a simple internet search and added to the spreadsheet.

At the very least, I read the table of contents and jacket cover material, skimmed the text in order to determine the main points of the textbook. At most, I completely read the entire book just for the purposes of analysis. I had read others during my career as a minister and because of my general interest in rural communities. Notes and summaries were entered into the spreadsheet.

To further gain an understanding about the books, I used the syllabi as guides and summarized the assigned readings for a class periods. These notes and summaries were entered into the table, indicating which class topic the reading was meant to cover. A similar process was used with films used in the courses. A table of information was compiled from internet searches and viewing segments when they were available. These tables and the spreadsheet along with the text on the syllabi contained the data used to analyze the content used in preparing clergy for rural ministry.

The general coding process outlined above was used to analyze this data set. Topics were created from which categories were formed and themes emerged through memo writing and reflection. The seven course content themes that emerged from the coding are:

- **Rural Context:** The Rural Context which contained information pertaining to demographic, social, and economic factors impacting rural communities.
- **Rural Churches:** The Rural Churches theme simply contained categories of topics describing the characteristics of rural churches.
- **Rural Culture:** Categories highlighted the norms, values and attitudes that are typically (sometimes stereotypically) found in rural communities and were labeled as the Rural Culture theme.
- **Pastoral Care in a Rural Context:** The Pastoral Care in a Rural Context theme contained information about clergy caring for others and also information about how to care of oneself in a rural ministry situation.
- **Leadership in a Rural Context:** Many categories of information were placed into the theme Leadership in a Rural Context. For example, worship leadership and church administration categories were placed in the church leadership theme.
- **Agriculture and Environment:** Content about various agricultural and environmental issues, including consolidation in the food industry and sustainable environmental policies, were placed in the broad theme of Agriculture and Environment.
- **Demographic Changes in Rural Areas:** The final course content theme encompassed information about ethnic migration patterns which leads to diversification and, population declines. This theme was given the name of Demographic Changes in Rural Areas.

The final step in the analysis was to code each syllabus using the seven themes that emerged from the entire data set. This provided a list of courses containing each theme. (See **Error! Reference source not found.**)

## **Trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide four areas to address when attempting to establish the trustworthiness of a qualitative research project. Those areas are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. I will address each one below.

**Credibility.** Credibility can be addressed in several ways including, “prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, triangulation, negative case analysis, checking interpretations against raw data, peer debriefing, and member checking” (Wildemuth, 2009, p. 317). The ten plus years I have worked in rural ministry and the three years I have been involved with the Rural Church Network have resulted in prolonged engagement in the field and persistent observation. Unfortunately, I did not take the opportunity to engage in member checking within this group. My relationship with some of the educators that provided syllabi would have easily allowed me to conduct a few member checks concerning my early analysis.

In regards to triangulation, Morse and Richards (2002) refers to triangulation as,

“gaining of multiple perspectives through completed studies that have been conducted on the same topic and that directly address each other’s findings. To be considered triangulated, studies must “meet”-- that is one must encounter another in order to challenge it (for clarification), illuminate it (add to it conceptually or theoretically), or verify it (provide the same conclusions)” (2002, p. 76).

The analysis in Chapter 5, Analysis of Course Content, illuminates the analysis of Chapter 4, Analysis of the Syllabi. The course type themes found in Chapter 4 were Contextual, Professional Skills Development, and Issue Specific. The course content theme in Chapter 5 illuminated these course types. Those themes were: The Rural Context (demographic, social, economic factors), Rural Churches (characteristics of rural churches), Rural Culture (norm, values, and attitudes typical in rural communities), Pastoral Care in a Rural Context (caring for rural people), Leadership in a Rural Context (leading rural churches and people), Agriculture and Environment (agricultural practices and sustainable environmental solutions), and Demographic Changes in Rural Areas (migration and ethnic diversification). The content of the courses fit well with the general intent and purpose of the courses. The analyses illuminate one another as they seek to describe the preparation of clergy to work in a rural context.

Credibility was strengthened by “checking interpretations against raw data” (Wildemuth, 2009, p. 317). The data was compiled from the entire set of syllabi and analyzed as a whole. After the themes emerged from the compiled data set, the themes were used to code each syllabus for the content themes found in each course.

**Transferability.** According to Wildemuth (2009) a researcher is “responsible for providing data sets and descriptions that are rich enough so that other researchers are able to make judgments about the findings’ transferability to different settings or contexts” (p. 317). Through the descriptions of the data collection process, the data

preparation process and the additional description of coding process in the data, rich information is provide for others to make the judgment about transferability.

**Dependability.** The research process is coherent and accounted for “changing conditions in the phenomena” (Bradley, 1993, p. 437). For example, themes emerged in the syllabi analysis that centered around knowledge types, therefore, Bloom’s revised taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001) was consulted and used to better describe the course types.

**Confirmability.** Confirmability helped in this research because my data was supplied by documents, rather than interviews where the researcher interjects more of his/herself into the data. Another researcher could compile all the data from the syllabi and collect the information about the course content because it is either provide directly or listed in an appendix. The part that would be impossible to replicate is me as the instrument for data gathering and analysis.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The results of this research are not generalizable to all courses and/or organizations seeking to prepare clergy to work in a rural context. The selection of the organizations was made to maximize variation; it was not a random sample. Furthermore, some of the members of the Rural Church Network that assisted with developing the list of organizations training clergy for rural ministry provided some of the syllabi, a clear violation of objective research. Even with the limitations noted, the

results do help describe clergy preparation for rural ministry and will be helpful to educators.

Overall this journey into a qualitative content analysis has been a learning experience. This methodical process has led to significant understanding about the preparation of clergy for working in a rural context. Chapters 4 and 5 reveal the discoveries made through this process.

## CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF COURSE SYLLABI

Very little is known about current preparation of clergy to work in a rural context. The field is not developed to the point where resources and research are shared in order to advance the training of rural clergy. Since the Rural Church Movement, no cohesive effort exists to improve clergy training to work in a rural context. Most certainly there is not a formal organization or society to query about course development.

This research seeks to describe and understand the educational preparation clergy have before they enter into rural communities. Some theological training organizations have special courses designed to specifically prepare clergy to work in a rural context. A sample of courses from these organizations will provide the information needed to begin to explore educational preparation of clergy to work in a rural context. Additionally, the research will help determine the human capital clergy have as they enter rural communities to work.

To adequately understand the preparation of clergy to work in a rural context, it is important to examine courses clergy are taking. This chapter includes an inventory and description of the twenty syllabi submitted and an analysis of the course descriptions, goals and objectives. As the data was being compiled, the course descriptions, goals and objectives provided in each syllabus included information about the motivation for offering the course, ideas about the usefulness of the course in clergy

preparation, and explanations of why the course was necessary to prepare clergy to work in a rural context.

During the Rural Church Movement, the call for rural progress help shaped the effort to prepare rural clergy. However, since the rallying effort of rural progress has diminished, what is common or cohesive about the purpose and intention of preparation of clergy to work in a rural context? In summary, the course descriptions, goals and objectives provide the best way to examine the general intentions and purposes of these courses as they relate to preparing clergy to work in a rural context.

The course descriptions, goals and objectives in the syllabi were studied and examined. Various methods were used to code the topics including highlighting, cutting and pasting text into table, and underlining. The topics were grouped into categories. The categories in the data were identified, further defined through memo writing and finally refined to the point where themes emerged describing the general intent and purposes for preparing clergy to work in a rural context.

The language that materialized from the notes and the memo writing contained concepts like creating awareness about rural issues, helping students understand social changes taking place in rural communities, providing students with the experience of rural church ministry, and providing students with the skills for rural ministry. These concepts pertained to knowledge development. As a result of this emerging pattern, related literature in the form of Bloom's revised taxonomy, was consulted to help describe the course type typology.

Bloom's revised taxonomy is a popular tool used by educators to assess learning and teaching. The method of evaluation outlined in *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, was not used in this research. However, Bloom's revised taxonomy provided language and descriptive elements regarding knowledge development that enriched the description of course type typology that emerge from the analysis of the course descriptions, goals and objectives. (Anderson et al., 2001).

Each of the twenty courses is described using the newly created course type typology. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the overall typology of the course types and what this reveals about the preparation of clergy for rural ministry.

Of the nine organizations contacted, five organizations responded by sending twenty syllabi. Duke Divinity School (Duke) submitted two syllabi used in their *Thriving Rural Communities* program. Wartburg Theological Seminary (Wartburg) submitted six syllabi used in their *Center for Theology and Land* program. The Rural Home Missionary Association (TACT) sent five syllabi used in the *Town and Country Training* program. Luther Seminary (Luther) submitted six syllabi and Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity (St Paul) provided one syllabus. These twenty syllabi from these five organizations included robust and varied rural clergy preparation programs; therefore they provided adequate data to examine how clergy are being prepared to work in a rural context.

As the syllabi were gathered, notes were taken about the course descriptions, goals and objectives. Categories and themes emerged from the analysis that helped organized the syllabi based on the general purpose and intent of the course. The

categories and themes were grouped to form a typology describing the type of knowledge each course was designed to convey. The typology consists of three types of courses. The course types were: Contextual, Professional Skill Development for Rural Ministry (PSDRM), and Issue Specific. To further describe the knowledge these courses were designed to convey, the revised edition of the educational assessment tool known as Bloom's Taxonomy was used as a resource (Anderson et al., 2001).

The knowledge dimension of the taxonomy includes four knowledge types, which are factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive.

**Factual Knowledge** – The basic elements students much know to be acquainted with a discipline or solve problems in it.

**Conceptual Knowledge** – The interrelationships among the basic elements within a larger structure that enable them to function together.

**Procedural Knowledge** – How to do something, methods or inquiry, and criteria for using skills, algorithms, techniques, and methods.

**Metacognitive Knowledge** – Knowledge of cognition in general as well as awareness and knowledge of one's own cognition. (Anderson et al., 2001, p. 46)

The first course type is **Contextual**. Contextual courses have course descriptions, goals and objectives which describe the intent to teach students knowledge concerning what it is like to be a clergyperson in a rural community. The contextual course type aligns with two Bloom's Taxonomy knowledge types; factual and conceptual (Anderson et al., 2001). For example, the contextual courses provide information such as typologies classifying rural areas and typologies describing types of rural or small churches. Eight courses are classified as contextual, making it the most prevalent course type analyzed.

The second course type is **Professional Skills Development for Rural Ministry** (PSDRM). Professional Skills Development course descriptions, goals and objectives revealed a purpose and intent to teach skills such as pastoral care and leadership duties especially for the rural context. These Professional Skills Development courses strove to enhance the professional skills and knowledge of students preparing to perform the duties of a clergyperson in a rural context. These courses aligned with the procedural knowledge type in Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001). Seven courses were classified as the Professional Skills Development course type.

The third and final course type is **Issue Specific**. The Issue Specific course descriptions, objectives and goals suggest the courses are designed for students to gain better understanding of a single issue impacting rural communities. These courses also seek to prepare students to educate and/or advocate with others about the issue. The courses provide contextual knowledge related to the specific issue being covered, which is similar to the Contextual course type. Furthermore, the goals and objectives describing the preparation of the students to educate and/or advocate for the issue are similar to those of Professional Skill Development courses. Therefore, the Issue Specific courses provide what is best described as a combination of factual, conceptual and procedural knowledge in Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001).

An example of an Issue Specific course is the Wartburg course *Issues in Rural Ministry—Immigration*. Immigration is the specific issue. The course description, goals and objectives suggest the intent to teach contextual knowledge about immigration. The course description, goals and objectives also indicate that students will learn how to

“develop biblical and theological resources for addressing [demographic] change in rural and small town settings” (Fritschel, 2011a, p. 1) This course is classified as Issue Specific because it focuses on a single issue (immigration), provides a contextual basis for understanding immigration, and then teaches the skills to educate and/or advocate for immigration.

Course duration emerged as another descriptive feature of the courses. The three course duration types include six Full Semester courses, three Eight Week Quarter courses and eleven Intensive courses. The intensive type varies in length. For example, an intensive course can be one week long or a weekend immersion experience. When a course is label an Intensive type, the duration of the class is also noted.

The inventory of course syllabi is included in this chapter. The course type is recorded in the inventory which is grouped by the five organizations that submitted syllabi. The inventory will also include course titles, the course date (if provided) the number of syllabus pages, the number of required textbooks, and the duration of the course.

### **Course Type Typology Overview**

The course descriptions, goals, and objectives were analyzed and coded seeking categories and themes describing the general purpose and intent of the courses. The categories and themes were further refined and a typology emerge that described the course descriptions, goals, and objectives in terms of the types of knowledge the courses were designed to convey. While there is some overlap between the course

types, this typology will provide a structure for a more thorough analysis of the course descriptions, goals, and objectives. The course types in the typology are: Contextual, Professional Skills Development for Rural Ministers, and Issue Specific.

Though these syllabi were coded without any preexisting framework in mind, the types of knowledge described in the revision of Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001) help describe the types of knowledge in each of the course types.

The four types of knowledge described in Bloom's revised taxonomy are factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge and metacognitive knowledge (Anderson et al., 2001).

**Factual Knowledge** – The basic elements students much know to be acquainted with a discipline or solve problems in it.

**Conceptual Knowledge** – The interrelationships among the basic elements within a larger structure that enable them to function together.

**Procedural Knowledge** – How to do something, methods or inquiry, and criteria for using skills, algorithms, techniques, and methods.

**Metacognitive Knowledge** – Knowledge of cognition in general as well as awareness and knowledge of one's own cognition (Anderson et al., 2001, p. 46).

The following is a description of the typology of the course types that emerged from the coding. The knowledge types in Bloom's revised taxonomy are used to help describe the course type typology that emerged from the analysis of the course descriptions, goals and objectives.

**Contextual.** The Contextual course type includes course descriptions, goals and objectives that shows a course designed to communicate information about the basic elements of life in rural areas, trends that shape rural life, and the norms and values of

rural culture. Furthermore the contextual course types include course descriptions, goals and objectives that communicate information about the interrelationships between rural and urban places and provide a structure to classify rural communities. These course descriptions, goals and objectives align with factual knowledge and conceptual knowledge from Bloom's revised taxonomy.

**Professional Skills Development for Rural Ministers.** In the Professional Skills Development for Rural Ministers (PSDRM) course type, the course descriptions, goals and objectives describe the general purpose and intent of the course as teaching clergy "how-to" skills needed in order to be a successful rural minister. In Bloom's revised taxonomy, knowledge taught in these Professional Skills Development courses fit the description of procedural knowledge (Anderson et al., 2001).

Rural clergy require special training or procedural knowledge to practice skills in a rural context. Two examples of skills these courses teach are pastoral care and leadership. A rural minister will not be successful if proper attention is not given to the proper way to conduct pastoral care and leadership in a rural setting. For example, in rural communities pastoral care is often conducted informally through casual visits rather than during formal counseling sessions in the pastor's office. With this knowledge, the student knows to get out and visit in the community and not to sit in an office and wait for people to come seeking help.

**Issue Specific.** In the Issue Specific course type, the course descriptions, goals and objectives point to a specific issue as the main topic of the course. Although these courses focused on one issue, the course descriptions, goals and objectives also indicate

the course is designed for students to learn how to educate and/ or advocate regarding this issue within the rural community. Therefore, these courses also include characteristics similar to Contextual and Professional Skills Development course types. The course descriptions, goals and objectives are designed to deliver factual, conceptual and procedural knowledge (Anderson et al., 2001).

For example, in the Duke course, Agrarian Theology for an Urban World, the course description explains that one objective is, “We will examine how an agrarian position differs and what this difference means for our thinking about creation, God, salvation, and the nature and mission of the church” (Wirzba, Spring 2010, p. 1). This objective conveys the factual and conceptual knowledge will be covered so the student will understand agrarianism. However, also stated, students are to “reinterpret theological motifs, with an agrarian point of view in mind” (Wirzba, Spring 2010, p. 1). This is procedural knowledge as describe in Bloom’s revised taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001). This combination of factual, conceptual, and procedural knowledge is typical of the general purpose and intent found in the Issue Specific course type.

### **Syllabi by Organization**

The following is a list of the twenty course syllabi and how the sixty-seven syllabus pages were distributed among the syllabi. This list includes the program title, rural ministry course titles, date of course syllabi, instructor’s name, number of pages in syllabi, and the number of required textbooks used in the course. Another descriptive

feature of the courses was the duration of the course, which is recorded below. Also the course type from the course type typology is listed.

**Duke Divinity School (United Methodist)**

- Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church, Spring 2011, W. Joseph Mann—3 pages, 7 textbooks, Full Semester, A Professional Skills Development Course (Mann, Spring 2011)
- Agrarian Theology for an Urban World, Spring 2010, Norman Wirzba—3 pages, 7 textbooks, Full Semester, An Issue Specific Course (Wirzba, Spring 2010)

**Wartburg Seminary (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)**

- Rural Plunge Weekend, Fall 2010, Ann Fritschel—2 pages, 6 textbooks Intensive Weekend, A Contextual Course (Fritschel, Fall 2010)
- Ministry in Rural Context, No Date, Ann Fritschel—3 pages, 6 textbooks Intensive Four Weeks, A Contextual Course (Fritschel)
- Rural J-Term 2011, Ann Fritschel—4 pages, 13 textbooks Intensive January Term, A Contextual Course (Fritschel, 2011b)
- Issues in Rural Ministry—Immigration, No Date, Ann Fritschel—2 pages, 4 textbooks Intensive Four Weeks, An Issue Specific Course (Fritschel, 2011a)
- Exploring Contemporary Rural Issues Through Film—Economic Displacement, No Date, Ann Fritschel—2pages, 1 textbook Intensive Four Weeks, An Issue Specific Course (Fritschel)

- Theology of Eating: A Course in Rural Ministry and Constructive Theology, No Date, Ann Fritschel—2 pages, 5 textbooks Full Semester, An Issue Specific Course (Fritschel)

**TACT/Rural Home Missionary Association (Evangelical)**

- Pastoral Care in the Town and Country Context, No Date, Ron Klassen—3 pages, 5 textbooks Intensive One Week, A Professional Skills Development Course (Klassen)
- Leading the Town and Country Church, No Date, Ron Klassen—3 pages, 5 textbooks Intensive One Week, A Professional Skills Development course (Klassen)
- Faith Communication in the Town and Country Context, Barney Wells—4 pages, 5 textbooks Intensive One Week, A Professional Skills Development course (Wells)
- Ministering in the Town and Country Church, Ron Klassen—4 pages, 4 textbooks Intensive One Week, A Contextual Course (Klassen)
- Seminar in Town and Country Ministry, Ron Klassen—4 pages 1500 pages required Intensive One Week, An Issue Specific Course (Klassen)

**Luther Seminary (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)**

- Changing Demographics and Economics of Rural Communities, Spring 2007, Alvin Luedke—4 pages, 8 textbooks Full Semester, A Contextual Course (Luedke, Spring 2007)

- Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry, Fall 2010, Alvin Luedke—4 pages, 7 textbooks Full Semester, A Contextual Course (Luedke, Fall 2010)
- Exploring Town and Country Ministry: New Challenges for Pastoral Ministry, Fall 2009 Alvin Luedke—5 pages, 6 textbooks Full Semester, A Contextual Course (Luedke)
- Leadership for Hope in Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministries, Spring 2010, Alvin Luedke—4 pages, 5 textbooks Eight Week Quarter, A Professional Skills Development Course (Luedke, Spring 2010)
- Rural Church Organization, Fall 2008, Alvin Luedke—3 pages, 5 textbooks Eight Week Quarter, A Professional Skills Development Course (Luedke, Fall 2008)
- Rural Church Leadership, Spring 2011, Alvin Luedke—4 pages, 6 textbooks Eight Week Quarter, A Professional Skills Development Course (Luedke, Spring 2011)

**Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity (Roman Catholic)**

- Rural Ministry/Practicum, January Term 2010 James F. Ennis, Facilitator—4 pages, 0 textbooks Intensive Five Days, A Contextual Course (Ennis, January Term 2010)

## Course Syllabi Analysis

The following is an analysis of the course descriptions, goals and objectives found in the twenty syllabi submitted by the five training organizations which responded to the request for data. This section will seek to describe the data related to descriptions, goals and objectives of each syllabus, which will lead to a better understanding of the general purpose and intent of the course. The analysis will describe the data found in the course descriptions, goals and objectives. Most of the courses had course descriptions, goals, and objectives characteristic of all three course types after the initial analysis was completed. The discussion below describes how the overall course type was ultimately determined.

**Duke Divinity School.** It must be noted that Duke has a robust outreach program called Thriving Rural Communities that conducts workshops, lunch seminars and host conferences, which seek to educate people involved in rural ministry. An analysis of this more informal educational outreach is beyond the scope of this research.

For the purposes of this research, two syllabi and course materials were studied. The courses are *Leading the Small Membership, and Rural Church* and *Agrarian Theology for an Urban World*.

***Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church Course, Duke Divinity School (A PSDRM Course)***. The course description and outline made up the data used to analyze the syllabus for *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church*. Specific objectives for the course are not listed, however, the course description reads:

The course will endeavor to help the student understand the nature of the small membership church and how it functions. Areas to be included will be a theological and sociological understanding of the rural church, administration of small membership churches, issues of staffing and denominational relationships, and methods of congregational and community analysis (Mann, Spring 2011, p. 1).

The data for this course was this course description and the outline of detailed class topic summaries. This data indicated the course was Contextual in nature because the intentions were to teach about: the identity of rural church, ecology of the rural church, and the rural church's relationship to the community. Data related to Professional Skills Development included designs to teach how to lead, preach, strategically plan, lead rural asset-based community development, and to do pastoral care in a rural context. Rural economic development was talked about contextually, but the course also included training on how to initiate a process to do rural economic development. This aspect was considered characteristic of an Issue Specific course type.

With the data pointing to all three course types, it was difficult to assign this course to only one of the course types. However, the course was typed as a Professional Skills Development due to the semester long project involving a congregational and community study. The project was designed to teach the procedure for conducting a congregational and community study. Such studies are an important skill for rural clergy.

***Agrarian Theology for an Urban World Course, Duke Divinity School (An Issue Specific Course)***. The course description and outline from the syllabus for the *Agrarian Theology for an Urban World* course contained the data used to analyze this

course. Specific objectives for the course were not listed, however, a description of the course reads:

This class will consider how the character of modern industrial, technological, consumer, and urban cultures has given shape to and directed particular kinds of theological reflection. We will then examine how an agrarian position differs and what this difference means for our thinking about creation God salvation, and the nature and mission of the church (Wirzba, Spring 2010, p. 1).

The course description focused on the theme of agrarianism and how clergy can advocate for its implementation. The course was designed to contrast agrarianism with the current thought and extend agrarian thought into their theological teaching and ministry. This singular focus on agrarianism and skills on how to teach and advocate from the agrarian viewpoint classified the course as an Issue Specific course type.

**Wartburg Seminary.** Wartburg Seminary submitted six course syllabi with three being designated as Contextual course types and three being Issue Specific course types. The following analysis describes how these course types were designated. The first three courses listed cover topics related to Contextual and Professional Skills Development course types. The next two courses were Issue Specific while providing enough Contextual course work for the student to be able to realize the impact on the rural community. The course descriptions, goals and objectives indicate Professional Skills Development regarding skills needed to promote social change. The last course listed was dominated by a single issue of food and eating, with the Professional Skills Development aspect concerning incorporation of topics into their theological reflection.

***Rural Plunge Weekend, Wartburg Seminary (A Contextual Course).*** The course description and objectives for the Rural Plunge Weekend provided the data for this course. The course objectives were:

1. To allow students to experience the dynamics of a rural community and congregation.
2. To encourage students to think about the role of the pastor of a congregation in a town and country setting.
3. To initiate students in to a different cultural context (Fritschel, Fall 2010, p. 1).

Data which indicated this was a Contextual course included intentions to expose students to rural communities and churches, make visits with rural families, take tours of a farms and a meat processing plant, and to initiate students into different cultural contexts. Much of this information was to be covered on the immersion experience.

Data related to Professional Skills Development were goals to teach clergy how to fulfill the role of a pastor in the church and the community and to lead worship services. However, the overall course type was designated as Contextual because of the prominence of the information designed to be share through the immersion experience in the course.

***Ministry in a Rural Context, Wartburg Seminary (A Contextual Course).***

The data for the analysis of *Ministry in a Rural Context* was found in the course description and the objectives. This course had characteristics of both Contextual and Professional Skills Development course types. The course objectives were:

1. The primary objective of this course is simply to encourage you to think about what it would mean to do ministry in a rural setting.

2. To reflect on the question, “What is the role of the pastor in a rural community and congregation?”

3. To introduce participants to the notion of congregational studies which can be of immense value in understanding the congregation in which you are/ will be called (Fritschel, p. 1).

Data which indicated this was a Contextual course included course objectives to help the students know “what it would mean to do ministry in a rural setting” and the value of learning from the rural residents.

Data related to Professional Skills Development were goals to teach clergy how to fulfill the role of the pastor in a rural community and how to reflect theologically about the rural context. However, the course title (Ministry in a Rural Context) gives a clue to the ultimate classification of this course. The amount of contextual information to be taught solidified this course as a Contextual course.

***Rural J Term 2011 Course, Wartburg Seminary (A Contextual Course).***

The data from the objectives for the Rural J Term course involve Contextual and Professional Skills Development characteristics. However, the immersion into the rural community and rural churches that sought to “introduction to dynamics impacting rural communities,” and to help the students to “better understand rural churches and communities,” placed this course into the Contextual course type (Fritschel, 2011b, p. 1).

Data related to Professional Skills Development were goals to teach clergy how to lead and reflect theologically about the rural context and how to evangelize and do missions in rural communities.

The course objectives were:

1. To introduce participants to the dynamics impacting rural communities and church members and the unchurched (the relation of Christianity to culture).
2. To encourage participants to think theologically about evangelism and mission in rural America and in congregations.
3. To offer participants some categories towards the goal of understanding rural congregations and communities and how they can lead and encourage the ministry of the laity in those congregations (the contextual and local nature of theology).
4. To allow participants to experience the pain and joy of rural people and their churches (Fritschel, 2011b, p. 1).

***Issues in Rural Ministry – Immigration, Wartburg Seminary (An Issue Specific Course)***. As is characteristic for an Issue Specific course, the data from this course description and goals dealt with a singular issue. The data also suggested characteristics of Contextual and Professional Skills Development course types. The issue of immigration was the main focus of the course. The Contextual information in the data dealt with giving the students a basic understanding of the culture and values of rural communities. This goal was accomplished through watching films depicting rural life and issues. The objectives and goals that were characteristic of Professional Skills Development were those to help the students “develop biblical and theological resources for addressing change in rural and small town settings” (Fritschel, 2011a, p. 1). The class sought to prepare the students with the procedural knowledge needed to teach and help rural communities properly handle immigration in the rural context.

The goals of the course are:

1. Gain an understanding of contemporary rural contexts by focusing on one issue.

2. Explore the issues surrounding rural immigrations.
3. Evaluate the arguments put forward by supporters and opponents of rural immigration.
4. Gain a beginning understanding of the process of change in rural communities.
5. Evaluate ecclesiastical resources for equipping congregations in communities to deal with rural immigration.
6. Develop biblical and theological resources for addressing change in rural and small town settings (Fritschel, 2011a, p. 1).

***Exploring Contemporary Rural Issues through Film—Economic***

***Displacement, Wartburg Seminary (An Issue Specific Course)***. The data from the course description and goals dealt with a singular issue for this course. Furthermore the data covered characteristics of Contextual and Professional Skills Development course types.

The issue of economic displacement was the main focus of the course. The Contextual information in the data dealt with giving the students a basic understanding of the culture and values of rural communities which was accomplished through watching films about economic conditions in rural America. Like the course on immigration, the data that made this an Issue Specific course was the addition of Professional Skills Development goals that were designed to help the students “develop biblical and theological resources for addressing change in rural and small town settings”(Fritschel, p. 1).

This course is designed to help students:

1. Gain an understanding of contemporary rural contexts by focusing on one issue.
2. Explore the issues surrounding rural economic change.

3. Evaluate the arguments put forward by supporters and opponents of different strategies for dealing with economic change.
4. Gain a beginning understanding of the process of change in rural communities.
5. Evaluate ecclesiastical resources for equipping congregations and communities to deal with rural economic change.
6. Develop biblical and theological resources for addressing change in rural and small town settings (Fritschel, p. 1).

***Theology of Eating: A Course in Rural Ministry and Constructive***

***Theology, Wartburg Seminary (An Issue Specific Course).*** The data for the analysis of this course came from the course description and objectives. The focus on the singular issue of food suggests characteristics of an Issue Specific course. Furthermore, the data contained Contextual information also such as objectives designed to increase the awareness of food supply systems and the role food has in rural life.

The data also revealed objectives for students to learn how to “interpret the events of everyday life – food and eating in all their multivariate meanings and roles— from a Christian perspective with the use of Biblical studies, theology, church history, ethics, congregational practices and skills, pastoral care, etc. (Fritschel, p. 1).

The objectives of the course were:

1. To encourage participants to work experimentally with theological materials – in this case, food and the food supply system – to articulate theological perspectives and norms for the Christian life.
2. To provoke students to think of food and food production and preparation as skills and delights that are especially indigenous to rural populations and may thus be a resource that the rural church has to offer the wider body of Christ.
3. To see plants, animals, and ourselves in an ecological web that is interconnected with the Creator and stands in ongoing relation to the Creator.

4. To be able to interpret the event of everyday life – food and eating in all their multivariate meanings and roles from a Christian perspective with the use of Biblical studies, theology, church history, ethics, congregational practices and skills, pastoral care, etc. (Fritschel, p. 1).

**Town and Country Training Program (TACT)/ Rural Home Missionary Association.** TACT provided five syllabi for analysis. Three courses were classified as Professional Skills Development courses, one was a Contextual course and one was assigned to the Issue Specific course type. Each of the TACT courses had an immersion component. The five courses were: *Ministering in the Town and Country Church*, *Pastoral Care in the Town and Country Context*, *Leading the Town and Country Church*, *Faith Communications in the Town and Country Context*, and *Seminar in Town and Country Ministry*.

None of these courses focused on one single issue specifically, however the final course listed, *Seminar in Town and Country Ministry*, could be an Issue Specific course if the student chose to focus his/her readings on a single rural issue. This course is student focused and is flexible enough to allow the students to choose a topic of interest.

***Ministering in the Town and Country Church, TACT/RHMA, (A Contextual Course)***. The data gathered for this analysis was located in the course description and objectives. The data indicated the general purpose and intent of this course was to provide students with knowledge of what it is like to minister in a rural context, therefore, it is designated as a Contextual course. Examples of data pointing toward a

contextual course were objectives such as “define ‘town and country’ in both quantitative and qualitative ways,” and “to build a vocabulary for the town and country context”(Klassen, p. 1). The objectives for this course also express Professional Skills Development data. For example, one objective states clergy will learn how to “successfully interact theologically and sociologically with members of the town and country church”(Klassen, p. 1). The course objectives were:

#### In Spirit

1. To catch a glimpse of God’s heart for town and country people and His perspective on the town and country church.
2. To feel a love and concern for the millions of people who live in town and country places in the United States and worldwide.
3. To see the town and country church as a vital part of the Body of Christ.

#### In Understanding (Cognitive)

1. To see the spiritual needs in town and country environments.
2. To define “town and country” in both quantitative and qualitative ways.
3. To identify the main features of the agrarian and cosmopolitan mindsets.
4. To identify the types of town and country economies and their impact on the town and country church and its context.
5. To recognize the contextual factors that gives a town and country church growth potential.
6. To grasp the effect of isolation on the web of relationships in which town and country people and churches exist.
7. To build a vocabulary for the town and country context.
8. To realize that ambition and success can be properly realized in the town and country context.

#### In Attitude (Affective)

1. To appreciate the unique strengths of the town and country church and its people.
2. To identify the town and country church as an acceptable and honorable calling.

#### In Skills (Behavioral)

1. To lead a church with both the agrarian and cosmopolitan mindsets to a unifying and fruitful cooperative ministry.
2. To successfully interact theologically and sociologically with members of the town and country church.
3. To use available printed and electronic resources to better understand the town and country church.
4. To formulate ministry strategies for such things as preaching teaching, evangelizing, vision casting, counseling, and administrating in ways sensitive to the town and country context (Klassen, p. 1).

***Pastoral Care in the Town and Country Context, TACT/RHMA (A PSDRM Course)***. Pastoral Care is a necessary skill to discuss with ministers. The data found in the course description and objectives focused on how to take care of parishioners, others in the community, one's self, and one's family. The focus on strengthening this skill in rural clergy makes it a Professional Skills Development course. The objectives for this course also provided data that pointed to a Contextual course type. An example is the objective that stated, "To identify the pastoral issues common among town and country residents" (Klassen, p. 1). However, the most significant data indicated this course focused on Professional Skills Development. The course objectives were:

**In Spirit**

1. To hold a spiritual concern for the millions of people who live in town and country places in the United States and worldwide.
2. To live out the example of Christ as expressed in Matthew 9:35-36.

**In Understanding (Cognitive)**

1. To differentiate between pastoral care issues that can be handled in the Town and Country church and those that should be referred.
2. To identify the pastoral issues common among town and country residents.
3. To identify issues that may impact the pastor's own health and well-being.

4. To understand the effects of isolation and intimacy on the pastor's family in the town and country context.
5. To realize the risks of working "solo" and the value of a network of support and accountability.

In Attitude (Affective)

1. To have a respect for the unique emotional and spiritual challenges of the town and country context.
2. To desire to keep one's self spiritually, emotionally, and physically healthy..

In Skills (Behavioral)

1. To lead parishioners to develop strategies that properly addresses the pressures of town and country life.
2. To act as a "first responder in crisis counseling situations in the town and country context.
3. To access long-distance support from more lightly trained counselors where referral is not an option.
4. To develop and implement strategies for personal and family well-being in the town and country context (Klassen, p. 1).

***Leading the Town and Country Church, TACT/RHMA (A PSDRM Course).***

Effectively leading a rural church requires being a capable leader. The data for this course indicates the general purpose and intent of this course is to develop professional skills in the rural clergy in the area of leadership. This general intent suggests the course is a Professional Skills Development course. Other data in the syllabus related to Professional Skills Development include objectives to teach clergy how to: to be a community leader, to use spiritual and social tools needed for leading, adapt leadership styles in different cultures, to do town and country church administration, to assess of one's own leadership style for organizational change, and to conduct strategic planning (Klassen).

Although the data from the objectives of this course deal mainly with the Professional Skills Development course type, the syllabus data also suggest themes related to the Contextual course type. For example the syllabus indicated the class was designed to give the student a cultural awareness of the town and country context.

The course objectives were:

In Spirit

1. To understand the leadership of the town and country church as a spiritual task.

2. To live out the example of Christ as a servant leader.

In Understanding (Cognitive)

1. Know different leadership styles and understand which are most effective in the town and country context.

2. Identify the cultural factors which may make leading change more difficult in the town and country context.

3. Understand and communicate the difference between form and content in the change process.

4. Identify and use various tools and strategies to implement change in the town and country church.

5. Know the unique components of town and country administration.

6. Grasp the inter-related roles of church and community leader in the town and country context.

In Attitude (Affective)

1. To love the people one is called to shepherd and to see church leadership as a relationship.

2. To value the form and function of Christ's body in town and country places.

In Skills (Behavioral)

1. Assess one's own leadership style and adapt it to the Town and country church.

2. Plan for needed change and respond to unexpected change in the town and country context.

3. Administer the physical, human, and financial resources of the town and country church.

4. Function as a community leader in the town and country context (Klassen, p. 1).

***Faith Communication in the Town and Country Context, TACT/RHMA (A PSDRM Course)***. Effectively communicating the tenants of faith is a skill needed by clergy. The data in the course description and objectives suggests the intent of the course is to enhance the clergy's skills in faith communication in a rural context. The course was designed to teach clergy how to preach, teach, and do personal evangelism in a rural context. Because the general purpose and intention of this course is to teach the skills for faith communication the course type is Professional Skills Development. Creating cultural awareness of town and country areas was the only data related to a Contextual course type.

The course objectives were:

In Spirit

1. To feel a burden to effectively communicate the Word of God in ways that make it most bearable in the town and country culture.

In Understanding (Cognitive)

1. To define "faith communication" in a broad sense, encompassing both formal and informal settings.
2. To identify the distinctive opportunities and challenges of preaching in town and country contexts.
3. To identify and overcome the challenges that low population density places on youth and children's ministries.
4. To realize the effects of intimacy and isolation in the town and country context on personal evangelism.

In Attitude (Affective)

1. To see the town and country community as a viable and important field for evangelism, preaching, and teaching.
2. To appreciate the uniqueness of town and country culture as it affects faith communication.

In Skills (Behavioral)

1. To carry on an effective Christian Education program for all ages with limited resources.

2. To employ appropriate evangelistic strategies for the town and country context.
3. To select appropriate resources for Sunday School and youth programs in the town and country setting.
4. To evaluate homiletic methods regarding their sustainability for the town and country church (Wells, p. 1).

***Seminar in Town and Country Ministry, TACT/RHMA (An Issue Specific Course).*** This course is a student-driven course offered by TACT as a capstone experience. The student can choose from a variety of suggested topics or propose a topic for the instructor's approval. Many of the suggested topics deal with social issues characteristically found in rural communities, therefore, this course was assigned as an Issue Specific course. However, if a student chose to focus on a Professional Skill needed in rural ministry, the assignment would be different. The course is flexible to allow the student to guide his/her course of study.

The course objectives were:

In Spirit

1. To desire lifelong learning, thereby fostering excellence in town and country ministry.

In Understanding (Cognitive)

1. To grasp the importance of the social, economic, and cultural contexts of town and country ministry in a deeper way.
2. To identify isolated and unique facets of town and country ministry.
3. To identify those areas of town and country ministry that stimulate the student's personal interest and passion.

In Attitude (Affective)

1. To value varieties of town and country ministry.
2. To appreciate the implications of other disciplines for town and country ministry.

In Skills (Behavioral)

1. To research a particular town and country ministry need and formulate a tentative strategy to address it.
2. To present a compelling need and a particular strategy for a diverse aspect of town and country ministry (Klassen, p. 1).

**Luther Seminary, (MNCTS).** Luther sent six syllabi. Three of the courses were assigned the Contextual course type and three were Professional Skills Development courses. The data for these courses was found in course descriptions, goals and objectives.

***Changing Demographics and Economics of Rural Communities, Luther Seminary (A Contextual Course).*** The data from the syllabus for this course clearly indicates this course was designed to be Contextual. The majority of data dealt with Contextual aspects of rural ministry, such as, “development, structure and maintenance of rural communities” (Luedke, Spring 2007, p. 1) demographics, economics, future challenges for leaders, and the role of the church in the rural communities.

Specific objectives for the course are not listed, however, a description of the course reads:

This course explores the development, structure, and maintenance of rural communities. The role of the church in community and the effects of agriculture on community economy will be explored. Future challenges for leaders of rural congregations will be addressed (Luedke, Spring 2007, p. 1)

***Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry, Luther Seminary (A Contextual Course).*** The data found in the syllabus for this course covered two course types; Contextual and Professional Skills Development. The Contextual data

indicated the course was designed to teach students about the “realities in small town and rural context,” and the “local, national, and global influences shaping small town and rural life” (Luedke, Fall 2010, p. 1). The theme of teaching clergy how to develop a mission strategy was the only indication of Professional Skills Development, therefore the course was designated as a Contextual course.

Specific objectives for the course are not listed, however, a description of the course reads:

This course is an introduction to the local, national, and global influences which are shaping small town and rural (STaR) life and ministry today. An emphasis will be placed on the realities of the small town and rural context and ways in which congregational leaders can creatively and faithfully respond in mission (Luedke, Fall 2010, p. 1).

***Exploring Town and Country Ministry: New Challenges for Pastoral Ministry, Luther Seminary (A Contextual Course).*** The course syllabus contained data to indicate Contextual and Professional Skills Development course types. The data supporting the Contextual course type includes statements from the course description such as “introducing students to small town and rural communities and congregations” (Luedke, p. 1). This course includes an immersion experience to facilitate the introduction to rural places. Because of the immersion experience and the plan to cover the economic, demographic, and environmental transition in southwestern Minnesota, this course was found to be the Contextual course type. The only Professional Skills Development data concerned the goal of teaching clergy how the contextual factors impacts leadership in rural churches.

Specific objectives for the course are not listed, however, a description of the course reads:

The purpose of the course is to introduce students to small town and rural communities and congregations, with the goal of students reflecting on implications for leadership in the Church within small town and rural communities. Emphasis will be placed on economic, population/ ethnic/ cultural, and environmental transition that is affecting communities and congregations in southwestern Minnesota (Luedke, p. 1).

***Leadership for Hope in Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministries, Luther Seminary (A PSDRM Course).*** The data from the syllabus for this course clearly pointed to the general purpose and intent to teach the skill of leadership to clergy. The overwhelming focus on skills for leadership development makes this a Professional Skills Development course. The leadership skills covered involved effective congregational and community leadership and work with laity. The only data pertaining to the Contextual course type was an indication of the goal of creating a cultural awareness while leading rural churches.

Specific objectives for the course are not listed, however, a description of the course reads:

Students use best practices model from the book *Discovering Hope: Building Vitality in Rural Congregations* (Poling-Goldenne et al., 2001) to explore STaR ministry. Special emphases are placed on the context of STaR communities and congregations, effective congregational and community leadership in the STaR context, and the role of the laity in STaR ministries (Luedke, Spring 2010, p. 1).

***Rural Church Organization, Luther Seminary (A PSDRM Course).*** The data from the syllabus for this course clearly suggest the general purpose and intent of this course as teach the skill of rural church administration. The overwhelming focus on skills to assess organizational structures, implement models of church leadership, and do church administration makes this a Professional Skills Development course. The only data pertaining to the Contextual course type was an indication of the goal of creating cultural awareness while providing administration to rural churches.

Specific objectives for the course are not listed, however, a description of the course reads:

This course studies the organizational structure of rural congregations and explores models of leadership within them. A theology of church administration and the administrative skills necessary for effective leadership in rural congregations will be addressed (Luedke, Fall 2008, p. 1).

***Rural Church Leadership, Luther Seminary (A PSDRM Course).*** The data from the syllabus for this course clearly demonstrates the general purpose and intent of this course is teach the skill of leadership to clergy. The overwhelming focus on skills for leadership development makes this a Professional Skills Development course. The leadership skills covered involved leading organizational change, leading social change with a theological emphasis, practicing leadership, and leading change in the rural congregation (Luedke, Spring 2011). The only data pertaining to the Contextual course type was an indication of the goal of creating a cultural awareness while leading rural churches.

Specific objectives for the course are not listed, however, a description of the course reads:

This course studies the theology, theory, and practice of leadership and explores several approaches to social and organizational change. Emphasis is placed on the pastor as a leader of change in the rural congregation (Luedke, Spring 2011, p. 1).

### **St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity (MNCTS).**

*Rural Ministry/ Practicum (A Contextual Course)*. The data of this course dealt with Contextual and Professional Skills Development course types. The data from the syllabus regarding the Contextual types includes onsite dialogue with rural people through an immersion experience, obtaining an understanding of catholic social teachings on agriculture, rural communities and creation (Ennis, January Term 2010). This data and the immersion experience made this a Contextual course. The Professional Skills Development course type data was the goal of teaching student how to reflect theologically and respond pastorally in the rural context.

Specific objectives for the course are not listed, however, a description of the course reads:

Explores the issues, rewards, and challenges encountered in the rural parish ministry. The course fosters theological reflection and pastoral response through study and onsite practicum where students dialogue with rural people, Catholic priests, and other ministers serving in rural settings (Ennis, January Term 2010, p. 1).

### **Conclusions**

The five organizations that responded by sending twenty syllabi provided a diverse collection of syllabi. The typology that emerged from coding the course

descriptions, goals and objectives describes the knowledge conveyed to students in each course. The alignment of the course types with the knowledge types found in Bloom’s revised taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001) led to a greater understanding of the various types of knowledge conveyed in the course content. The following table summarizes the number of syllabi of each theme that each organization contributed. There were a total of eight Contextual courses, seven Professional Skills Development courses, and five Issue Specific courses.

**Table 4. Summary of Course Types by Organization**

Organization and Affiliation	Contextual (Factual and Conceptual)	PSDRM (Procedural)	Issue Specific (Factual, Conceptual, and Procedural)
Duke (United Methodist)		1	1
Wartburg (ELCA*)	3		3
TACT (Evangelical)	1	3	1
Luther (ELCA*)	3	3	
St. Paul (Roman Catholic)	1		

\* Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The eight Contextual courses taught factual, conceptual knowledge and the seven Professional Skills Development courses taught procedural knowledge. The four Issue Specific courses were special cases that taught factual, conceptual and procedural

knowledge. The TACT program is the only organization that had a course in all three types. St. Paul only submitted one syllabus, which was a Contextual course. Duke submitted two syllabi one was a Professional Skills Development course and the other was an Issue Specific course type. However it must be noted the Professional Skills Development course was heavily Contextual. This course included teaching the procedure to conduct a congregational/community study which placed it in the Professional Skills Development course type.

Wartburg and Luther both submitted six syllabi for this research. Both of them had three courses in the Contextual course type. However, Wartburg's additional courses were Issue Specific and Luther's other three courses were Professional Skills Development courses.

A determination of which organization has the best course offerings to prepare clergy to serve in a rural context is beyond the scope of this research. Rather, the knowledge gained from this analysis of course descriptions, goals and objectives provided insight on the knowledge types instructors are teaching. The fact that eight courses teach contextual knowledge about rural ministry indicates many of the students do not have previous knowledge of rural life. The extensive effort made to introduce the rural context to students reduces the time these instructors spend on skill development and preparing the students to effectively handle other issues, such as demographic change. Since the evidence seems to point to fewer students coming to theological education from rural areas (Biema, 2009), these contextual classes are the most important courses to prepare clergy to work in a rural context.

A cohesive force uniting the intentions and purposes of the preparation of clergy to work in a rural context was not found in this analysis. Even though the rallying force of the Rural Church Movement is gone, interested parties would benefit from routine gathering to share resources. Rural clergy are no longer needed to modernized rural America as they once were, however they need the capacity to lead, coach, guide, and care for churches and communities as they face the social change caused by modernization.

Chapter 4 has examined the general purpose and intent of the twenty courses (determined by the course descriptions, goals, and objectives). Chapter 5 will examine the subjects, activities, and materials used in the twenty courses to find the knowledge and sociological concepts taught in the courses.

## CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS OF COURSE CONTENT

Educators who seek to educate clergy have few resources to consult regarding the subjects, activities and materials that prepare clergy for the diverse rural communities present in the United States. The fractured nature of the religious landscape in the United States is not conducive to a national professional organization promoting rural ministry preparation. Without a national professional organization educators are on their own searching for resources to use as course content.

The twenty syllabi gathered for this research provided rich sources of information about the subjects, activities and materials used to prepare clergy to work in a rural context. The list of textbooks, articles and films used in the courses was enough to make this research advantageous (See Appendix A. Textbooks and Films Bibliography). Also, the analysis of the course content will prove helpful to educators in making determinations about additional content to better prepare clergy to work in a rural context.

Chapter five illuminates (Morse & Richards, 2002) the analysis of the syllabi described in chapter four because both analyses seek to describe the preparation of clergy for rural ministry. Chapter four was an analysis of the course descriptions, goals and objectives of the twenty syllabi. That analysis revealed a typology that described the general purpose and intent of the course in terms of the types of knowledge (Contextual, Professional Skills Development, and Issue Specific) each of the twenty courses class sought to convey to the students.

Chapter five is an analysis of the course content found in the twenty course syllabi. The course content includes the information described in the syllabi regarding subjects and activities, as well as, textbooks, films and other materials used to convey information during the courses. Seventy-three books and articles, sixteen films, were also included in this analysis. While an in-depth analysis of the books, articles and films is beyond the scope of this research, basic descriptions of the resources used in the courses will be examined as data. For the purposes of description for this report the term used to describe the data will be “subjects, activities, books, and other materials.”

The information found in the subjects, activities, books, and other materials of all twenty syllabi created the data for this analysis of course content. The bibliographic information and the Library of Congress subject headings were entered into a spreadsheet for each book. The author’s biographic information from either the book jacket or through a simple internet search was collected and added to the spreadsheet.

To learn about the subjects and ideas found in the reading material, the table of contents, and jacket material were read and the text was skimmed. Other books were read completely for the purpose of this research. In addition, I had read several of the books during my career as a minister and because of my general interest in rural communities. Notes and summaries were entered into the spreadsheet.

To further gain an understanding about the reading material, tables were created by summarizing the assigned reading for a particular class noting the topic on the syllabus it was intended to cover. A similar process was taken with films used in the courses. A table of information was compiled from internet searches and by viewing

segments of the films when they were available through the internet. The table created by summarizing a class reading assignment, the tables about films, the spreadsheet, books and articles themselves, and the text on the syllabi created the data used to analyze the content used in preparing clergy for rural ministry.

The data was compiled, read, examined and notes were made concerning the information about the subjects, activities, books, and other materials. Various methods were used to code the topics including highlighting, cutting and pasting text into table, and underlining. The topics were grouped into categories. The categories in the data were identified and further defined through memo writing. Finally, the categories were refined and themes emerged describing the subjects, activities, books, and other material used as course content for preparing clergy for rural ministry.

The seven course content themes that described the majority of course content in the twenty courses examined are: The Rural Context (demographic, social, economic factors), Rural Churches (characteristics of rural churches), Rural Culture (norm, values, and attitudes typical in rural communities), Pastoral Care in a Rural Context (caring for rural people), Leadership in a Rural Context (leading rural churches and people), Agriculture and Environment (agricultural practices and sustainable environmental solutions), and Demographic Changes in Rural Areas (migration and ethnic diversification).

**The Rural Context** theme is used to describe course content material (subjects, activities, books, and other materials) that seek to describe the rural context. The content in this theme informed students about the social change happening due to

demographic, social, and economic factors impacting rural communities. The Rural Context course theme was found in fifteen of the twenty courses examined. Most of the courses provided at least a basic framework of what they meant by rural.

**The Rural Church** theme is used to describe course content material (subjects, activities, books, and other materials) that seeks to describe the rural church and the role of the rural church in rural communities. This theme is found in ten of the twenty courses examined.

**The Rural Culture** theme is used to describe course content material (subjects, activities, books, and other materials) that seek to define the rural culture. The Rural Culture content theme contained information about the norm, values, and attitudes typically found in rural communities. This theme is found in fourteen of the twenty courses examined. Like the Rural Context course theme, many courses provided information about rural life and its culture and some demonstrated rural life through immersion experiences.

The theme of **Pastoral Care in a Rural Context** is used to describe course content material (subjects, activities, books, and other materials) which pertained to the issue of pastoral care, with emphasis clergy caring for others, oneself, or one's family. The Pastoral Care in a Rural Context course content theme was found in six of the twenty courses examined. This content theme is more narrowly focused, which reduced the number of courses that contained this theme.

The theme of **Leadership in a Rural Context** is used to describe course content material (subjects, activities, books, and other materials) related to leadership, with

emphasis on issues related to leadership in the rural context. This theme was found in twelve of the twenty courses examined. Due to the diversity of leadership categories within the Leadership in a Rural Context courses, this content theme was found in many courses.

The theme of **Agriculture and Environment** is used to describe course content material (subjects, activities, books, and other materials) related to the subjects of Agriculture and the Environment. The content in this theme contained information on the agriculture industry that was critical of the consolidation in the industry. The information about the social, environmental change as a result of industrial agriculture pointed to harmful impacts on rural communities. The Agriculture and Environment course content theme was found in eight of the twenty courses examined. The historical association of rural communities and agriculture made the course content relevant in the course materials.

The theme of **Demographic Changes in Rural Areas** was found in five courses. These courses had subjects, activities, books, and other materials related to defining and describing the demographic changes occurring through migration and ethnic diversification. Many rural areas have been homogeneous throughout their history and ethnic diversification causes social problems such as inequality and racial divisions.

This chapter will describe the ways in which the course content material indicated a particular course content theme. After each course content theme is described, the courses that contain good representations of the course content theme will be listed. The lists of representative courses were generated after a reexamination

of the syllabi using the themes that emerged from the entire collection of the subjects, activities, books, and other materials. Multiple content themes were often found in each course (See **Error! Reference source not found.**).

For example, *Issues in Rural Ministry—Immigration* (Wartburg) exemplifies the course content theme of Rural Context and Demographic Change. The courses that contain subjects, activities, books, and other materials that exemplify and represent each course content theme are listed at the end of each course content theme discussion.

Each of these course content themes represents a variety of subjects, activities, books, and other materials, used to teach the information. Each of the course content themes and the course materials and activities used to convey the information to the students will be described below. This analysis will examine the various subjects, activities, books, and other materials used to adequately convey the course content theme.

### **The Rural Context**

The course content theme related to Rural Context is found in the subjects, activities, books, and other materials that convey information intended to help rural clergy increase their understanding about the various dynamics of rural communities. These subjects, activities, books, and other materials sought to define, describe, and compare the rural context and communities. This content provided information about the economic and ethnic diversity found in rural areas and what life is like in those rural

areas. It also informed students about the social changes taking place as a result of industrialization and migration patterns. In general, the subjects, activities, books, and other materials covered information about demographic, economic, and social trends that are impacting rural communities. Information about the geography of rural areas the type of work residents perform also contributed to the establishment of a rural context course content theme.

The course materials and activities used in the formation of The Rural Context course content theme was diverse and included books, films, studies, agriculture bulletins, and a congregational/ community study. The information in the following course materials formed the basis for course content theme of The Rural Context.

- *Sustaining Heart in the Heartland*, (M. Brown, 2005)
- *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*, (Farris, 2000)
- *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*, (Jung, 1998)
- *No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town-Church*, (Klassen & Koessler, 1996)
- *Abundant Harvest : Essays on Rural Life and Ministry in Honor of Dean and Elsie Freudenberger*. (Freudenberger, Freudenberger, Klimoski, & Barker, 2002)
- *Rural Congregational Studies: A Guide for Good Shepherds*, (Jung & Agria, 1997)

- *Discovering Hope: Building Community in Town and Country Congregations*, (Poling-Goldenne et al., 2001)
- *Studying Congregations – A New Handbook*, (Ammerman, 1998)
- *Understanding Rural America*, (1995)
- *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change*, (Flora & Flora, 2008)
- *Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century*, (D. L. Brown, Swanson, Barton, & Rural Sociological, 2003)
- *Policy Options for a Changing America*, (Leslie)

While a detailed analysis of these course materials (books, reports and films) is beyond the scope of this research, a general understanding of the content covered in these books, reports and films demonstrates how rural clergy are being prepared to work in a rural context. The following are examples of the use of course content that informs student about the demographic, economic, social trends that are shaping rural life, which led to the formation of The Rural Context course content theme.

Describing or defining the rural context was presented in a variety of ways in the courses and course material. For example, *Changing Demographics* and *Economics of Rural Communities*, a Luther course, uses chapter one of the book *Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century* by Kenneth M. Johnson, an expert demographer, to demonstrate who lives in rural America impacts the rural context. Chapter one titled, “Unpredictable Directions of Rural Population Growth and Migration” outlines the

patterns of population changes and increasing diversity occurring on a large scale throughout the United States of America (D. L. Brown et al., 2003).

Another description of the rural context was addressed in an Agricultural Research Bulletin published by the Economic Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1995. Two Wartburg courses, *Exploring Contemporary Rural Issues Through Film: Economic Displacement* and *Issues in Rural Ministry: Immigration* used this bulletin titled "Understanding Rural America." This publication gives an overview of the social, economic, and demographic changes occurring in rural America. The publication sets forth a typology based on the major economic influences in the county. The county types are: Farming, Manufacturing, Services, Retirement-Destination, Federal Lands, and Persistent Poverty Counties (*Understanding Rural America*, 1995). This is a dated typology and the Economic Research Service has updated this work since this research bulletin was published in 1995.

The book, *Rural Congregational Studies: A Guide for Good Shepherds* (Jung & Agria, 1997) provides a variety of factors that can be used to define and describe the rural context. These factors include:

**Geography/Demographics:** The number of people and the density of people can be a factor in defining rural. Also, the distance from a larger town or city can be a factor.

**Economy:** Other factors used to define rural are: economic influences that are centered on the land, the size of the local economy and the dependency of a single industry.

**Population Characteristics:** Changes in the population, whether increasing due to an influx of people or declining due to out-migration is a factor when defining rural.

**Mind-Set or Values:** Mind set or values includes traditions spanning multiple generations, powerful ties to place or the land, experiences and time are shared cyclically rather than linearly and collective memory and tradition are valued over innovation, and customs are excepted without much introspection or self-analysis (Jung & Agria, 1997).

**Typologies for Defining the Rural Context.** Some of the course materials relied on typologies created in the rural sociology discipline to describe the rural context. R. Alex Sim and Cornelia and Jan Flora are sociologists who have studied rural communities. These sociologists organized their findings into typologies describing typical rural communities. Each of these typologies creates a means of comparing the diversity and variety of rural communities.

For students learning about the rural context, these typologies allow them translate this information into useful knowledge. Descriptions of the two typologies used in the course materials are included below. Also listed are the courses and textbooks where the typologies were used to inform students about the rural context.

***R. Alex Sim Typology.*** The most common typology used in the courses was the R. Alex Sim typology. Sim, in his book *Land and Community*, (1988) developed this

typology. The four types of rural communities were labeled as Ribbonvilles, Agravilles, Mighthavebeenvilles, and Fairviews.

In Sim's typology, Ribbonvilles are communities that are characterized by growth along a thoroughfare that has encapsulated once independent villages or towns. Farmland is being converted to housing and retail centers while the population of the area grows.

Agravilles are communities that are dependent on agriculture, mining, logging or drilling. They are beyond the reach of Ribbonvilles and have population up to 100,000. Often Agravilles have national retail centers and draw people in from up to twenty miles to shop at these outlets.

Mighthavebeenvilles are communities that have not experienced the population and retail growth in Agravilles and Ribbonvilles. Mighthavebeenvilles were once bustling with social and economic life, but are now struggling in both areas. Much angst is had over the loss of towns that have now become Mighthavebeenvilles.

Fairviews are places that Sim sees as growing in population due to the recreational and natural resources found in an area. People come to these places to swim, ski, fish, hike and retire. The growth in these rural communities changes the rural culture and Fairviews are more similar to urban places (Jung, 1998).

Sim's typology is found in several textbooks including, *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come* (Jung, 1998), *Discovering Hope: Building Vitality in Rural Congregations* (Poling-Goldenne et al., 2001), and *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry* (Farris, 2000). In *Discovering Hope: Building Vitality in Rural Congregations*, (Poling-

Goldenne et al., 2001), Sim's typology is amended to include the type Countryville.

Countryville communities are "surrounded by fields and farms and often located a few miles from the nearest town" (Poling-Goldenne et al., 2001, p. 103).

The following courses use one or more of the textbooks discussed above as a way to convey information about rural community types in form of Sim's typology.

- *Rural Plunge Weekend*, (Wartburg)
- *Rural J-Term*, (Wartburg)
- *Changing Demographics and Economics of Rural Communities*, (Luther)
- *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry*, (Luther)
- *Exploring Town and Country Ministry: New Challenges for Pastoral Ministry*, (Luther)
- *Leadership for Hope in Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministries*, (Luther)

***Flora and Flora Typology.*** Jan Flora and Cornelia Flora are sociologists from Iowa and have studied communities to find characteristics of healthy and viable rural communities. Four types of rural communities were identified in *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change* based on rural community research. The types of rural communities they have identified are: Amenity-Based Rapid Growth, Persistent-Poverty Communities, Rural and Remote, and Rapid-Growth Exurban (Flora & Flora, 2008).

**Amenity-Based Rapid Growth** communities are communities similar Sim's Fairview communities, where the population is growing due to the natural resources available in the area. People are attracted to the outdoor activities and vistas that are

naturally part of the landscape. People come to these areas to ski, boat, swim, raft and retire, and the growth attracts service industry jobs to the area also.

**Persistent-Poverty** Communities are places where jobs once provided by extractive industries or manufacturing have are not available. Education levels are well below average and the youth have little reason to want to stay. Many of Sim's Mighthavebeenvilles would be located in these persistent-poverty places. However, Sim does not make an economic determination when discussing Mighthavebeenvilles.

**Rural and Remote** communities are far from metropolitan centers. They are generally losing population. However, poor economic conditions are as prominent in these communities. The community type of Countryville which was added to Sim's typology by Poling-Goldenne and Jung seems to match the best with this Flora and Flora type.

**Rapid-Growth Exurban** communities are experiencing rapid growth due to their close proximity to large metropolitan areas. Sim's Ribbonville and Agraville are similar to this Flora and Flora type. The culture of the communities that are enveloped by the rapid growth is a mix of urban and rural cultures. At times the mix of cultures causes clashes between the old and new residents of these communities.

The course, *Ministering in the Town and Country Church*, offered by TACT is the only course that used the Flora and Flora typology. The text *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change (Flora & Flora, 2008)* was a required reading

**Congregational/Community Studies used in Rural Context Courses.** In addition to these books, films, studies, and agriculture bulletins, the procedure of

conducting a congregational/community study was an activity in the Rural Context course content theme. The typologies described above help the students generally understand the rural context. Learning how to conduct Congregational/Community studies prepared the students to discover their local context.

The Duke course, *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church* (Mann, Spring 2011), provides an example of a class project that teaches the students how to collect the necessary information to understand their local rural context. The class project consisted of a community study, a local church study and a report of the findings. The instructor supplied the forms to gather the information and the students spent time researching the history and current situation of the community and church in order to collect the information needed to understand the context in which ministry takes place.

This exercise used some of the methods found in the assigned reading of Ammerman's *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (1998). The students are instructed to consider geographic, demographic, economic, and community institutions (including all the churches) and the changes that take place in these areas.

For the particular church, the students are instructed to compile information on membership and attendance over the past decade, historical information about the church, demographic information of the adherents, and programs offered. Finally, they look at the finances of the church.

In the final report, the students are instructed to consider the following areas:

- An analysis of the community and its impact on the congregation.

- The characteristics of the membership and the role of the church in the community.
- An evaluation of the effectiveness of the church's program.
- The future possibilities for the congregation. (Mann, Spring 2011, p. 6)

Courses that use the textbook *Rural Congregational Studies: A Guide for Good Shepherds* (Jung & Agria, 1997), were also exposed to conducting a congregational/community study. This book was constructed as a handbook and the student could therefore implement the steps provided in the handbook in his/her specific place of ministry.

Two other textbooks that used an abbreviated form of congregational/community studies were *Shepherding the Small Church* (Daman, 2002) and *The Indispensable Guide for Smaller Churches* (Ray, 2003). These books used a set of questions that led the reader through a brief study of the congregation and community.

After reexamining the syllabi, the Rural Context course content theme is exemplified and represented in the following fifteen courses:

1. *Exploring Contemporary Rural Issues Through Film: Economic Displacement*, (Wartburg)
2. *Issues in Rural Ministry: Immigration*, (Wartburg)
3. *Rural Plunge Weekend*, (Wartburg)
4. *Rural J-Term*, (Wartburg)
5. *Ministry in Rural Context* (Wartburg)

6. *Changing Demographics and Economics of Rural Communities*, (Luther)
7. *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry*, (Luther)
8. *Rural Church Leadership*, (Luther)
9. *Rural Church Organization*, (Luther)
10. *Leadership for Hope in Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministries*, (Luther)
11. *Exploring Town and Country Ministry: New Challenges for Pastoral Ministry*, (Luther)
12. *Ministering in the Town and Country Church*, (TACT)
13. *Leading the Town and Country Church* (TACT)
14. *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church*, (Duke)
15. *Rural Ministry/Practicum (St. Paul)*

## **Rural Churches**

The ability to understand rural churches as an organization helps clergy have a successful ministry. The course content theme of Rural Churches is found in the subjects, activities, books, and other materials that convey information intended to help rural clergy understand a variety of issues facing rural churches. Subjects, activities, books, and other materials related to defining, describing and comparing rural churches were found. Other materials covered information about the practical role rural churches have as a social institution in rural communities.

One of the dominate characteristics that impacted some of the materials used to cover this theme was the size of the church. Generally, rural churches tend to be small,

therefore, some of the course materials used to describe rural churches are written for small churches and not necessarily for rural churches that happen to be small. The information in the following materials formed the basis for course content theme of Rural Churches.

- *Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-first Century*, (Dudley & Dudley, 2003)
- *Entering the World of the Small Church*, (Pappas, 1988)
- *Inside the Small Church*, (Pappas, 2002)
- *The Big Small Church Book*, (Ray, 1992)
- *The Indispensable Guide to Smaller Churches*, (Ray, 2003)
- *Unleashing the Potential of the Smaller Church*, (McMullen, 2006)
- *Delafield Film* (Brodin, 2001)
- *Shepherding the Small Church*, (McMullen, 2006)
- *Rural Congregational Studies: A Guide for Good Shepherds*, (Jung & Agria, 1997)
- *No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town-Church*, (Klassen & Koessler, 1996)
- *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*, (Jung, 1998)
- *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*, (Farris, 2000)
- *Studying Congregations : A New Handbook*, (Ammerman, 1998)

While a detailed analysis of these course materials (books, reports and films) is beyond the scope of this research, a general understanding of the content covered in

these books, reports and films demonstrates how rural clergy are being prepared to work in a rural context. The following are examples of the use of course content that led to the formation of the Rural Churches course content theme.

One area the course content focused on was the role rural churches had in rural communities. Rural churches and the clergy in rural communities have different roles than their suburban or urban counter-parts.

The content related to the role of rural churches/clergy in the community presented was through class lectures and the textbooks. The TACT course, *Leading the Town and Country Church*, spent the last day of the week long course on the topic of community leadership lead by Dr. Barney Wells. There was not specific textbook reading assigned for this class session. The same is true for the *Rural Ministry/Practicum*, a St. Paul course. The content was covered in a series of lectures and the recordings were not available for analysis.

The Luther course, *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry* uses *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry* (Farris, 2000) explains the ministerial role in small towns by giving the roles they play in community life. The “trusted outsider” is the person community members can confide in when facing personal issues. The “pontifex” is the bridge builder to people and places outside the community and networking within community across social and economic boundaries. The third role is that of “community builder.” As the church is gathered, the caring and sharing of needs and community needs helps create the sense of community. Farris also recognizes the context matters when determining these roles.

The Duke course, *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church* used *Studying Congregations : A New Handbook* (Ammerman, 1998) to cover this topic. Ammerman (1998) summarized social science research on the way church function in communities. One limitation of this work is that the studies focused mainly on urban or suburban communities and churches. However, the findings can be useful in help clergy understand the role they and their churches play in communities. One of the most useful studies highlighted involved a typology created by Roozen, McKinney, and Carroll that was two dimensional. It categorized churches as “this worldly” or “otherworldly” and “member-centered” or “publicly proactive” (Ammerman, 1998, p. 74).

Understanding the role churches and clergy play have in the community is important knowledge for students to have. Through the lectures and readings, those clergy preparing to work in a rural context would benefit from learning these concepts.

The courses that used the information about the role of the church and it’s clergy in rural communities were:

- *Leading the Town and Country Church*, (TACT)
- *Rural Ministry/Practicum*, (St. Paul)
- *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church*, (Duke)
- *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry*, (Luther)

Besides the role church churches have, distinctive features emerged from the course content data used to describe rural churches. Some of the course content included information derived from sociological investigations of churches or borrowed

from organizational theories. Others simply used observation and experience to create descriptions of ideal types of small and/or rural churches. The following is a list of concepts and typologies commonly found as course content used to describe the characteristics of rural churches.

- Small church as a “Caring Cell”
- Small Church as a “folk society”
- Walrath Typology
- Rothauge Typology
- Schaller Typology
- Klassen and Koessler Typology

The small church as a “Caring Cell” is a concept defined in *Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-First Century* (Dudley & Dudley, 2003). This book was used in *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church* (Duke). Carl Dudley introduces the reader to the concept of a small church being a Primary Group as defined by sociologist Charles Cooley. The members of this primary group give and receive care from other members forming what Dudley called a “Caring Cell.” Dudley’s book is an examination of the implications of small churches being primary groups (Dudley & Dudley, 2003).

In contrast, Pappas found it useful to think of small churches as a folk society, which is a concept borrowed from anthropology. Some of the characteristics that described folk societies were descriptive of the society found in small churches (Ray,

1992). The Wartburg courses *Rural J Term* and *Ministry in a Rural Context* make use of Pappas's concept of small churches as folk societies.

**Rural/Small Church Typologies.** Four typologies were used in the Rural Church course content theme to describe rural/small churches: Walrath typology, Rothauge typology, Schaller typology, and Klassen and Koessler typology. For each typology a brief description of the types is given.

**Walrath Typology.** Walrath's typology like Klassen and Koessler include an allowance for the church's context. Walrath distinguishes between small churches located in the context of rural, fringe, and city neighborhood. The rural context includes small towns and open country. The fringe context includes suburbs and exurbs where population growth has expanded. The city neighborhoods context includes ethnic and minority and redeveloping neighborhoods. In each of these contexts, Walrath contends that different social changes are taking place that impact the small churches located there (Ray, 1992).

Walrath's typology therefore is more general in order that the types cover each of these contexts. The Walrath types are Dominant Churches, Denominational Churches, Distinctive Churches, Newcomer Congregations, Indigenous, and Culturally Mixed.

Dominant Churches are the churches with the tallest steeple, well-funded and home to the affluent community members. It is perceived by community members to be "the" church to belong to.

Denominational Churches are known more by their affiliation with Methodist, Presbyterians or Baptists organizational entities. The members of these churches are loyal to the denomination even when the particular pastor is not meeting their expectations. The members wait for the pastoral leadership to change rather than switching churches. The church reputation can also be impacted by the denomination's national stances that community members hear reported through the press.

Distinctive Churches have a single feature that creates a desire in people to participate. They are not bound by denominational affiliations but are known for being liberal or conservative, charismatic or highly liturgical or having a healing ministry. Whatever the distinction is, people are attracted by that feature of the church.

Newcomer Congregations are churches in areas of growing population and the new people change the former rural church culture into an urban church culture. The new people enter into leadership roles and the native people of the church are tolerant of the change or leave the church.

Indigenous Congregations are churches where long-term residents and family kinships dominate the church. These churches are more insular and isolated from metropolitan areas. These churches are not appealing to new people because they never overcome the outsider status. These churches are struggling due to social change and their willingness to embrace it. Denominational officials and pastors find these churches the most difficult to help transition to health and vibrant communities of faith.

Culturally Mixed Congregations are churches in expanding cities and town where newcomers mix in with the long-standing residents. The difference between these churches and the newcomer churches are that the long-time residents are still the dominate members. In these churches the leaders walk a delicate line between the newcomers and the long-time residents desires. This often causes conflicts to arise.

***Rothauge Typology.*** Arlin Rothauge creates a typology is based on the number of active members. The four types are Family Church (up to 50), Pastoral Church (50-150), Program Church (150-350), and Corporation Church (over 300).

A Family Church (up to 50) tends to have close-knit relationships and attract new members through the networks of the individual members. The lay leadership often acts as gatekeepers and becoming a part of the fellowship is a slow process build trust to the point of acceptance.

A Pastoral Church (50-150), is driven by the pastor and the leaders loyal to his/her ministry. People attend or not based on their opinion of the pastor. However the pastor has to develop programmed strategies to assimilate the new people.

A Program Church (150-350) provides many activities and ministry options for different age groups. The lay leaders have to be trained and have an active role in these churches for the programs to be effective.

A Corporation Church (over 300) is a complex and diverse organization. Usually a capable charismatic leader operates as a pastor and chief operating officer. He/She is able to cast a vision and coordinate the hired and lay leaders who effectively manage all the divisional units within the corporate church (Ray, 1992).

***Schaller Typology.*** Lyle Schaller uses the number of people who attend worship as a measure of church size. The church size dictated the type of church in Schaller's typology. Schaller uses creative names to illustrate the difference between the church types. Fellowship Church (up to 35), Small Church (35-100), Middle-sized Church (100-175), Awkward Church (175-225), Large Church (225-450), Huge Church (450-700), and Mini-Denomination (700 and up) (Ray, 1992).

Fellowship Churches (up to 35) are nicknamed "The Cat." These churches are independent, self-sufficient like a cat enjoys the pastor feeding but it does not belong to the pastor and get along ok without a pastor.

Small Churches (35-100) are nicknamed "The Collie." These churches respond to love. When care and concern is given, care and concern is returned. The pastor who loves the church will have a loyal companion through his/her ministry.

Middle-sized Churches (100-175) are called "The Garden." In a garden the work is never completed and weeds can spring up quickly.

Awkward Churches (175-225) are called "The House." Like the maintenance of the house requires specialized skills, so does an Awkward church. There are always repairs, remodeling and rearranging taking place in the house.

Large Churches (225-450) are nicknamed "The Mansion." More help to run and maintain the large church is always need. The members do not experience the closeness of a tight knit community and therefore, experience low commitment to the large church.

Huge Churches (450-700) are called “The Ranch.” The senior pastor is like a ranch manager who hires ranch-hands to keep the church running effectively

Mini-Denominations (700 and up) are call “The Nation.” These entities create their own materials, have a variety of high quality programs and the often have a school attached to them.

***Klassen and Koessler Typology.*** In *No Little Places: The Untapped Potencial of the Small-Town Church*, Klassen and Koessler provide the only typology specific to rural churches. The types in their typology are An Isolated Rural Church, A Traditional Rural Church, A “Wal-Mart” Church, and A Rurban Church.

An Isolated Rural Church is a church that is located in a very small community with no large metropolitan area close by. The economy is singularly focused, usually agriculture, and the economic conditions are not bad, but the community is not thriving either.

A Traditional Rural Church is a church that is active in the community life. Strong lay leaders have a health image for the purpose of the church. Also the church has a family atmosphere where sharing and mutual support is important. The church not only focuses on itself, but communicates it faith with the local community and international locales through work projects and community activities.

A “Wal-Mart” Church is a church centrally located between otherwise small isolated communities. The church becomes a hub of activities that attract people from multiple towns. The “Wal-Mart” church offers a selection of ministry activities for age specific groups. Those activities include Bible study, mission trips and recreation. A

“Wal-Mart” church can support more than one staff person because the congregation is larger.

A Rurban church is found in larger communities where traditional rural values meet faster urban oriented culture. These churches have a cafeteria approach to ministry offerings where members chose which ministry they participate in. The focus is on quality programming and a desire for excellence in worship and teaching. They have to intentionally nurture a sense of community by offering programming that brings people together through care and nurturing (Klassen & Koessler, 1996, p. 107).

The film, *Delafield*, was used in the course content theme of Rural Churches. Delafield is about the closing of Delafield Evangelical Lutheran Church in Delafield, Wisconsin after a 125 year history of ministry in the community (Brodin, 2001). This film was used in the Luther course, *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry*.

After reexamining the syllabi following the course content analysis, the Rural Churches course content theme is best exemplified and represented in the following courses:

1. *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church* (Duke)
2. *Rural J Term* (Wartburg)
3. *Ministry in a Rural Context* (Wartburg)
4. *Leading the Town and Country Church*, (TACT)
5. *Faith Communication in the Town and Country Context*, (TACT)
6. *Ministering in the Town and Country Church*, (TACT)
7. *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry*, (Luther)

8. *Changing Demographics and Economics in Rural Communities* (Luther)
9. *Leadership for Hope in Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministries* (Luther)
10. *Rural Ministry/Practicum* (St. Paul)

## **Rural Culture**

The course content theme related to Rural Culture is found in the subjects, activities, books, and other materials that convey information intended to help rural clergy increase their understanding about rural culture. Rural culture is defined as the attitudes, norms, values, types of relationships, the ways people communicate and in general the way people live. In speaking about rural living, some of the information cover social problems impacting rural communities such as, inadequate education, poverty, and substance abuse. Subjects, activities, books, and other materials containing information related to defining and describing rural culture were examined.

The information in the following materials formed the basis for course content theme of Rural Culture. This material includes activities, books, reports, and films.

- *Jaybar Crow*, (Berry, 2000)
- *The Gifts of the Small Church*, (Byassee, 2010)
- *Leaving Home*, (Keillor, 1987).
- *Open Secrets: A Memoir of Faith and Discovery* (Lischer, 2002)
- *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography* (Norris, 1993)
- *Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will Rogers, Uncle Remus, and Minnie Pearl*, (Sample, 1994)

- *Moving To A Small Town: A Guidebook for Moving From Urban to Rural America*, (Urbanska & Levering, 1996)
- *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*, (Farris, 2000).
- *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*, (Jung, 1998)
- *No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town-Church*, (Klassen & Koessler, 1996)
- *Abundant Harvest : Essays on Rural Life and Ministry in Honor of Dean and Elsie Freudenberger*. (Freudenberger et al., 2002)
- *Leading Through Change*, (Wells, Giese, & Klassen, 2005)
- *The Essential Agrarian Reader : The Future of Culture, Community, and the Land*, (Wirzba, 2003)
- *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*, (Berry & Wirzba, 2002)

#### Films

- *Funny Farm*, (Hill, 1988)
- *Vernon, Florida*, (Morris, 1981)

While a detailed analysis of these course materials (books, reports and films) is beyond the scope of this research, a general understanding of the content covered in these books, reports and films demonstrates how rural clergy are being informed about rural culture. The following are examples of the use of course content that led to the formation of the Rural Culture course content theme.

Like the previous course content themes, the course content used to introduce rural culture to the students included a variety of formats. Included are: excursions to rural places (immersion experiences), reading autobiographical and fictional literature, reading course materials comparing rural culture to urban culture, and watching videos depicting rural life. Further discussion about how these formats taught rural culture is described.

**Immersion Experiences.** The instructors planned rural retreats, farm visits, industrial site visits, rural church visits, and other “in context” activities to introduce students to rural culture. The nine courses that included immersion experiences are described below:

Four of the five TACT courses had cultural immersion experiences included in their class schedule. The immersion experiences were described as, “hands on and may involve contact with livestock, soil, agricultural and industrial environments, and outdoor recreational activities” (Klassen, p. 3). Other immersion activities involve interviews with rural residents which were used in case studies (Klassen, p. 3).

The four TACT courses that included immersion experiences were:

- *Pastoral Care in the Town and Country Context*
- *Leading the Town and Country Church*
- *Faith Communication in the Town and Country Context*
- *Ministering in the Town and Country Church*

Wartburg supplied two syllabi that involved immersion experiences. *Rural Plunge Week* involved students leaving on a Friday afternoon and returning on a Sunday afternoon. They traveled to the Clinton, Wisconsin area. The description of the activities planned for the trip state, “Activities include staying with farm/rural families, touring farms and processing plant, a supper at Jefferson Prairie Lutheran Church with host families, and participation in Sunday worship service and discussions” (Fritschel, Fall 2010, p. 1). The students were asked to reflect on the trip as if they were a minister in rural location.

The other Wartburg course was *Rural J-Term*. This immersion experience involved traveling by train from Iowa to Minot, North Dakota for a week-long stay. Like the other Wartburg course, the activities included, meeting rural residents, worshipping in rural churches, and touring farms. After the trip, the class met three times to reflect on and to discuss various aspects of rural ministry.

Two other courses also involve immersion experiences. Those courses are *Exploring Town and Country Ministry: New Challenges for Pastoral Ministry*, a Luther course and *Rural Ministry Practicum*, a St. Paul course. The purpose of the Luther course is stated as, “to introduce students to small town and rural communities and congregations, with the goal of students reflecting on implications for leadership in the Church within small town and rural communities” (Luedke, p. 1). The class meets four weekends at the retreat center.

The St Paul course, *Rural Ministry Practicum*, involved an immersion experience to Shalom Hill Farm. Shalom Hill Farm is a rural ministry retreat center in southwestern

Minnesota. The St. Paul course, syllabus states, “The immersion experience will include visits to three rural communities as well as opportunities to interact with ministers, priest, and a farmer in rural Minnesota” (Ennis, January Term 2010, p. 1). This course is a five day intensive course. Both the Luther and St. Paul courses require reflection papers on what it would be like to be a pastor in this rural context.

The final course that includes an immersion experience is *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church* at Duke. This immersion experience is a simple day visit to a small rural church and Anathoth Gardens, which is a farm that uses sustainable agriculture practices. According to the syllabus, the immersion experience seeks to answer the following questions, “What is life on the farm like? And “What is the relationship of agriculture, farming, care for the land and the church?” (Mann, Spring 2011, p. 3). This immersion experience occupies one class meeting time in a full semester course.

These nine courses offer a variety of immersion experiences. Immersion experiences are great ways to introduce students to rural cultures. The students have the opportunity to reflect and discuss the rural culture in a safe learning environment.

**Autobiographical Books and Fictional Literature and Films.** Two forms of literature and films were used as content to introduce rural culture to the students. The first was autobiographical accounts of ministers working in rural churches. The second form of literature used was fictional books that depict rural life and culture. Two courses used films depicting rural life as a way to introduce rural culture.

***Autobiographical Books.*** Three autobiographical books were used to introduce students to rural culture and specifically rural culture from the perspective of rural ministers. The three books were: *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography* (Norris, 1993), *The Gifts of the Small Church* (Byassee, 2010), *Open Secrets: A Memoir of Faith and Discovery*, (Lischer, 2002).

These authors were self-proclaimed urbanites having cross-cultural experiences while working in these rural churches. Each book details the author's cross-cultural experiences. Many times, they were surprised by the circumstances they found themselves in as ministers in rural communities. These books were appropriate for the task of introducing rural clerical students to rural culture.

Kathleen Norris moved from New York City where she was a writer and poet to the Dakotas where is connected to the land of her ancestors and became a minister in the churches there. Norris, talked about relationships, but much of her journey was marked with a connection with the land (Norris, 1993). *The Gifts of the Small Church* is an account of Jason Byassee, a Methodist minister, who was placed in rural churches in North Carolina and Virginia as he finished his academic studies at Duke Divinity School (Byassee, 2010). *Open Secrets: A Memoir of Faith and Discovery*, is Richard Lischer's story of the first three years of ministry in a rural Lutheran church in Illinois after completing is doctoral work (Lischer, 2002). Byassee (2010) and Lischer (2002) focused more on the relationships with the people they met in the churches and communities.

***Fictional Books.*** The fictional books used to introduce students to rural culture were, *Jaybar Crow* by Wendell Berry and *Leaving Home* by Garrison Keillor. In *Jaybar*

*Crow*, the main character, Jaybar Crow, illustrates characteristics of life in rural communities where personal relationship and the connection to place are championed (Berry, 2000). *Leaving Home* is a collection of Keillor's stories of rural life in the fictional Lake Woebegone, Minnesota, which were first heard on the radio show Prairie Home Companion (Keillor, 1987).

***Fictional Films.*** Two films were used to introduce clergy to rural culture. The films were: *Funny Farm* which was used in the Luther course *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry* and *Vernon, Florida* which was used in the Duke course *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church*. *Funny Farm* is a comedic popular culture film that followed an urban-oriented couple as they moved in to a small town (Hill, 1988). *Vernon, Florida* is a documentary film which showed interviews with local, sometimes eccentric, residents of Vernon, Florida speaking about activities, life and living in Vernon, Florida (Morris, 1981).

**Rural Culture versus Urban Culture.** Another area of the content in the Rural Culture course content theme focused on comparisons between rural and urban cultures. Comparing rural to urban culture is a thread running through many of the courses, however the comparison is intentionally use as course content in some courses. For the students to comprehend the rural culture, the comparison of the two cultures provided a way to translate rural culture. With urban being the hegemonic culture comparing rural culture to urban culture creates knowledge and comprehension about rural culture. The following textbooks provide explicit urban/rural comparisons around

the subjects of values, importance of place, communication, relationships, types of work, types of leadership, social status and morals:

- *Leading Through Change* (Wells et al., 2005)
- *Abundant Harvest: Essays on Rural Life and Ministry in Honor of Dean and Elsie Freudenberger* (Freudenberger et al., 2002)

In *Abundant Harvest* (Freudenberger et al., 2002) and in *Leading Through Change* (Wells et al., 2005) the rural/urban comparisons is made using the terms of “agrarian” and “cosmopolitan.” They define agrarian people who “have always lived in the country” (Wells et al., 2005, p. 26) and cosmopolitan as all the others moving in to rural areas from a variety of different places. Wells’ et al (2005) use of the term “agrarian” does not have the same meaning as the agrarian movement promoted in the edited books by Norman Wirzba.

Wells et al (2005) provide examples of different ways agrarians and cosmopolitans view subjects. An example is the topic of success. To agrarians, survival means success, which is a contrast to cosmopolitans who want to see advancement to be successful.

Chapter six, “Making a Place for Yourself” in the book *Moving to a Small Town: A Guidebook for Moving from Urban to Rural America* by Wanda Urbanska, and Frank Levering (1996) was the assigned reading. This chapter pulls from literature about cross-cultural experiences and informs the readers of the primacy of relationships and the expectations of being a member of a rural community.

The book *Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will Rogers, Uncle Remus, and Minnie Pearl* (Sample, 1994), provides the most foundational comparisons between rural and urban people by addressing the way they know the world and the way they communicate what they know. By comparing the traditionally oral-oriented rural culture with the printed word-oriented urban culture, Sample provides valuable knowledge that will help rural clergy better communicate with their parishioners.

The book *Shepherding the Small Church* (Daman, 2002), discusses the ways to “Evaluate the Mind-Set” of the community. The characteristics of the community related to politics (conservative or liberal) and type of work (white or blue collar), along with other factors creates a contrast between rural and urban communities.

In *No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town Church* (Klassen & Koessler, 1996) cross-cultural experiences are shared through stories of mishandled ministry. For example, a rural pastor started working at the church and tried to make the worship service perfect asking only excellent musicians to perform and by delivering very well-prepared and rehearsed sermons. The pastor loosened his standards, involved more people, and became less rigid, which the parishioners appreciated. The pastor reflected on this experience and then stated,

“I could not be effective in that ministry until I became a student of the culture in which I had come to minister, until I left behind the ways of doing things that I had brought with me from my previous culture, then learned to minister in ways appropriate to my adopted culture” (Klassen & Koessler, 1996, p. 50)

In *Rural Evangelism: Catching the Vision* (Ruffcorn, 1994) the centrality of personal relationships in rural culture is highlighted. Although the book deals specifically with evangelization, it makes the reader culturally aware of the rural norms and values and how they differ from urban norms and values.

In *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry* (Farris, 2000) comparison of rural culture and urban culture as Farris explains some of the values generally found in rural communities. These values in rural communities include a sense of community, longevity, sense of place, and forbearance.

In *The Essential Agrarian Reader : The Future of Culture, Community, and the Land* (Wirzba, 2003), and *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Berry & Wirzba, 2002), the topic of Agrarianism provides the contrast of rural place-based existence based on traditional values and popular consumer culture which is disconnected from the land. Agrarianism advocates forming a new economic order by replacing popular consumer culture with sustainable social and environmental systems based on ties to the land.

After reexamining the syllabi following the course content analysis, the Rural Culture course content theme is best exemplified and represented in the following courses:

1. *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church* (Duke)
2. *Agrarian Theology for an Urban World* (Duke)
3. *Rural Plunge Weekend* (Wartburg)
4. *Rural J-Term* (Wartburg)

5. *Ministry in Rural Context* (Wartburg)
6. *Pastoral Care in the Town and Country Context* (TACT)
7. *Leading the Town and Country Church* (TACT)
8. *Faith Communication in the Town and Country Context* (TACT)
9. *Ministering in the Town and Country Church* (TACT)
10. *Exploring Town and Country Ministry: New Challenges for Pastoral Ministry*  
(Luther)
11. *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry* (Luther)
12. *Leadership for Hope in Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministries* (Luther)
13. *Rural Church Leadership* (Luther)
14. *Rural Ministry/Practicum* (St. Paul)

### **Pastoral Care in the Rural Context**

The course content theme of Pastoral Care in the Rural Context is found in the subjects, activities, books, and other materials that convey information intended to help rural clergy increase their understanding about performing pastoral care in a rural context. Pastoral care is an essential duty for clergy and most receive training in this area. An in-depth study of the skills needed for pastoral care is not the focus of this research. Rather, the focus is on how the content prepares rural clergy to deliver pastoral care in a rural context. Consequently, this analysis will only include a discussion about how the course content informs student about the impact of the rural context on practicing pastoral care.

The Pastoral Care theme includes the two areas of pastoral care: Care for others and Care of self. The information in the following materials formed the basis for course content theme of Pastoral Care in the Rural Context.

**Books about Pastoral care for others**

- *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church, (Killen, 2005)*
- *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry, (Farris, 2000)*
- *No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town-Church, (Klassen & Koessler, 1996)*
- *Discovering Hope: Building Community in Town and Country Congregations, (Poling-Goldenne et al., 2001)*

**Books about Pastoral care of self**

- *Clergy Self-Care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry, (Oswald, 1991)*
- *How to Thrive as a Small Church Pastor: A Guide to Spiritual and Emotional Well-Being, (Bierly, 1998)*

While a detailed analysis of these course materials is beyond the scope of this research, a general understanding of the content covered in these books, demonstrates how rural clergy are being prepared to work in a rural context. The following are examples of the use of course content that led to the formation of the Pastoral Care in the Rural Context course content theme.

Pastoral care of others involves attentiveness to the spiritual needs of people, through counseling, caring, and support. In general, the emphasis concerning doing

pastoral care in the rural context is placed in the relational nature of rural people. Furthermore, initiation of pastoral care and setting where pastoral care occurs is different for the rural context. For instance, a counseling session in a rural context does not often happen in an office, but rather, through personal visits in the homes of the parishioners, at the coffee shop, little league games, or even in the fields as a farmer tends to the crops. Farris (2000) emphasizes the role of pastoral care of the community. By being present in the community, people outside of the active church membership also benefit from the pastoral care of rural clergy. Ron Klassen writes on this subject in the following paragraph taken from *No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town Church*

“I quit spending so many hours a week hidden away in my study and started spending a lot more time with people. Though I had no particular personal interest in hunting, for the sake of spending time with the men, I learned to hunt. I spent a lot more time hanging out at the local café, the place where the ranchers gathered daily to socialize” (Klassen & Koessler, 1996, p. 47).

Pastoral Care of Self is an area of pastoral care that is covered in the course content. In the rural context a pastor's care for self becomes important. Feelings of isolation, demands on time, and lack of privacy can lead to problems for the pastor. The textbooks offer a variety of ways to handle these issues, such as join peer groups of other ministers, leave town on days off, or be intentional about protecting time to spend with family. Killen (2005) highlights the issue of pastoral self-care when he writes, “The ministry can sometimes be a lonely and thankless job. For that reason, ministers must be very intentional about establishing boundaries and making provision

for their own physical, emotional, and spiritual health and that of their families” (2005, p. 93)

After reexamining the syllabi following the course content analysis, the Pastoral Care in the Rural Context course content theme is best exemplified and represented in the following courses:

1. *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church*, (Duke)
2. *Pastoral Care in the Town and Country Context*, (TACT)
3. *Ministering in the Town and Country Church*, (TACT)
4. *Leadership for Hope in Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministries*, (Luther)
5. *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry*, (Luther)
6. *Rural Church Organization*, (Luther)

### **Leadership in the Rural Context**

The course content theme of Leadership is found in the subjects, activities, books, and other materials that convey information intended to help rural clergy increase their understanding about the dynamics of leadership in a rural context.

Content for the Leadership in the Rural Context course content theme was divide into a variety leadership duties performed by rural clergy. The Leadership theme includes the five areas of pastoral leadership, leading organizational change, church administration, worship leadership, and educational leadership.

Each of these areas represents the various leadership roles clergy encounter. This analysis will examine how leadership is discussed for those who are leaders in a

rural context. The information in the following materials formed the basis for course content theme of Leadership in the Rural Context.

#### **Books about Pastoral Leadership**

- *The Multi-Church Parish*, (R. L. Wilson, 1989)
- *The Shepherd Leader*, (Van Yperen, 2003)
- *Shepherding the Small Church*, (Daman, 2002)
- *Leading the Small Church*, (McCarty, 1991)
- *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, (Easum & Bandy, 1997)
- *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, (Heifetz, 1994)
- *Discovering Hope: Building Community in Town and Country Congregations*, (Poling-Goldenne et al., 2001)
- *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*, (Farris, 2000)

#### **Books about leading organizational change**

- *Letting Go: Transforming Congregations for Ministry*, (Phillips, 1999)
- *Innovative Church: Seven Steps to Positive Change in Your Congregation*, (Strommen, 1997)
- *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*, (Steinke, 1993)
- *Leading Change in the Congregation: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders*, (Rendle, 1998)

- *Leading Through Change: Shepherding the Town and Country Church in a New Era*, (Wells et al., 2005)

#### **Books about church administration**

- *Church Administration: Programs, Process, Purpose*, (Bacher & Cooper-White, 2007)
- *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, (Evangelical Lutheran Church in, 1987)
- *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, (Callahan, 2010)

#### **Books about leading Worship**

- *Preaching and Worship in the Small Church*, (Willimon & Wilson, 1980)
- *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*, (Tisdale, 1997)
- *Wonderful Worship in Smaller Churches*, (Ray, 2000)

#### **Books about leading educational programs**

- *Children's Ministry Guide for Smaller Churches*, (Chromey, 1995)
- *Help! I'm a Small Church Youth Worker*, (Grassel, 2002)
- *Christian Education in the Small Church*, (Griggs & Walther, 1988)
- *Rural Evangelism: Catching the Vision*, (Ruffcorn, 1994)

While a detailed analysis of these course materials (books, reports and films) is beyond the scope of this research, a general understanding of the content covered in these books, reports and films demonstrates how rural clergy are being prepared to work in a rural context. Therefore, the following are examples of the use of course

content that led to the formation of the Leadership in the Rural Context course content theme.

**Pastoral Leadership.** A common theme in the Leadership course material was Pastoral Leadership. The dominate feature about content used to teach about pastoral leadership is the imagery of the pastor being a shepherd. In the rural context, this analogy works well with the residents who have experience with livestock. The imagery is also used in the Bible to describe leadership. In this type of leadership, the leader does not rule authoritatively, but much more like a guide ministering to the needs of the “flock.” This dynamic gives authority to the church members rather than the pastor having the authority. Glenn Daman describes leadership in a small church as, “servant leadership, where we sacrifice our own personal agenda and pride for the well-being of the whole” (2002, p. 45). For example, pastor as shepherd leader is emphasized in *Leading the Town and Country Church* (TACT).

**Leading Organizational Change.** Another common area of focus within the theme of Leadership deals with the course content regarding leadership during organizational change. This emphasis seems to especially focus on organizational change in the small church.

The sentiment in this material deals with many small churches have lost their vision and purpose. Changing the organization in a rural church is not done from the positional authority of the pastor who has all the answers. It is better accomplished when leaders “are not the ones with irrefutable answers but the ones who can support others and help them ask the right questions” (Rendle, 1998, p. 17). Furthermore,

leadership in rural churches is done through relationships. Wells et.al. state, “A key to leading through change, then, is leading through relationship” (Wells et al., 2005, p. 85). Leading organizational change was part of the content in the course *Leading the Town and Country Church* (TACT) and *Rural J-Term* (Wartburg).

**Worship Leadership.** Other course content material related to the area of worship leadership. The key point of the course content about worship leadership in rural churches is that the people are more important than the performance. Also, the worship service is central to creating a sense of community through sharing personal concerns. The Duke course *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church* illustrates this content through the use of *Preaching and Worship in the Small Church* (Willimon & Wilson, 1980).

The Church Administration and Educational Leadership themes were unique because they focused on the skills of administration and education in the rural context. These skills are often included in theological training, yet this course content focuses on the unique role of administration and education within the rural context and in a rural church. Clergy would not have the same demands for administration and education skills in a rural setting as in an urban setting. For example, the unique educational skills needed for teaching children and youth in rural churches is examined in two texts, *Children’s Ministry Guide for Smaller Churches* (Chromey, 1995), and *Help! I’m a Small Church Youth Worker* (Grassel, 2002).

After reexamining the syllabi following the course content analysis, the Leadership in the Rural Context course content theme is exemplified and represented in the following courses:

1. Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church (Duke)
2. *Rural Plunge Weekend* (Wartburg)
3. *Ministry in Rural Context* (Wartburg)
4. *Rural J-Term 2011* (Wartburg)
5. *Leading the Town and Country Church* (TACT)
6. *Faith Communication in the Town and Country Context* (TACT)
7. *Ministering in the Town and Country Church* (TACT)
8. *Leadership for Hope in Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministries* (Luther)
9. *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry* (Luther)
10. *Rural Church Organization* (Luther)
11. *Rural Church Leadership* (Luther)
12. *Rural Ministry/Practicum* (St. Paul)

## **Agriculture and Environment**

The course content theme of Agriculture and Environment is found in the subjects, activities, books, and other materials convey information intended to teach rural clergy about the agricultural industry and environmental issues. Traditionally, agriculture has been synonymous with rural because of the prominent role agriculture plays in the economic and cultural life in rural communities. This course content

examined the relationships between agriculture, the land, and place found in rural communities, as an introduction to subjects related to the agricultural industry and environmental issues. Much of the material highlighted at the consolidation of agricultural industry and social change associated with it from a critical perspective. As an alternative to the industrial agricultural industry, sustainable agriculture and environmental practices were highlighted in the course content. The information in the following materials formed the basis for course content theme of Agriculture and Environment. This material includes books, reports, and films.

- *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*, (Davis, 2009)
- *The Art of the Commonplace*, (Berry & Wirzba, 2002)
- *The Essential Agrarian Reader*, (Wirzba, 2003)
- *From the Farm to the Table*, (Holthaus, 2006)
- *Lord. Of the Land & the Spirit*, (Northbourne, Merton, James, & Fitzgerald, 2008)
- *Wendell Berry and Religion*, (Shuman & Owens, 2009)
- *Becoming Native to This Place*, (Jackson, 1994)
- *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*, (Jung, 1998)
- *Sustaining Heart in the Heartland*, (M. Brown, 2005)
- *Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century*, (D. L. Brown et al., 2003)
- *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change*, (Flora & Flora, 2008)

- *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice*, (Evangelical Lutheran Church in, 1993a)
- *Toward Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All: A Social Statement on Economic Life*, (Evangelical Lutheran Church in, 1998)
- *Abundant Harvest: Essays on Rural Life and Ministry in Honor of Dean and Elsie Freudenberger*, (Freudenberger et al., 2002)

### **Films**

- *Obery Farms: A Family's Legacy*, (Obery, 2009)
- *The Oregon Story: Rethinking the Forests*, (Cain & Oregon Public, 2005)

While a detailed analysis of these course materials (books, reports and films) is beyond the scope of this research, a general understanding of the content covered in these books, reports and films demonstrates how rural clergy are being prepared to work in a rural context. The following are examples of the use of course content that led to the formation of the Agriculture and Environment course content theme.

The course material used in the Duke course, *Agrarian Theology for an Urban World*, is an example of content pointing to the formation of the Agriculture and Environmental course content type. The materials center on the main concept of Agrarianism.

Agrarianism, according to Norman Wirzba, “is this compelling and coherent alternative to the modern industrial/technological/economic paradigm” (2003, p. 4). Wirzba goes further to say that Agrarianism “takes seriously what we know about the

earth –scientific ecological principles that govern all life forms – and what we know about each other – the social scientific and humanistic disciplines that enrich human self-understanding” (2003, p. 4).

Agrarianism is critical of modern industrial agriculture and its impact on culture and the environment. Agrarianism is not only a rural farming movement, but also urban dwellers have to overcome their disconnection to the land to help transform the culture into a culture that sustains it people and environment.

The Luther Seminary course *Changing Demographics and Economics of Rural Communities* also includes course content indicative of the Agriculture and Environment course content theme. For example, the use of the denominational position papers/reports provides some the information taught to the students. A positional paper used in this course entitled, *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice and Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All: A Social Statement on Economic Life* includes information about the official stance the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) regarding agricultural and environmental issues.

These ELCA publications mentioned above and the materials about the Agrarianism have a critical stance against modern industrial agricultural practices. Whether from an environmental sustainability stand point or socio-cultural standpoint, modern industrial agricultural is criticized. Likewise, the books *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come* (Jung, 1998) and *Abundant Harvest: Essays on Rural Life and Ministry in Honor of Dean and Elsie Freudenberger* (Freudenberger et al., 2002) highlight the consolidation in the agriculture industry as being bad for society.

After reexamining the syllabi, the Agriculture and Environment course content theme is best exemplified and represented in the following courses:

1. *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church* (Duke)
2. *Agrarian Theology for an Urban World* (Duke)
3. *Exploring Contemporary Rural Issues Through Film—Economic Displacement* (Wartburg)
4. *Ministering in the Town and Country Church* (TACT)
5. *Changing Demographics and Economics of Rural Communities* (Luther)
6. *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry* (Luther)
7. *Exploring Town and Country Ministry* (Luther)
8. *Rural Ministry/Practicum* (St. Paul)

### **Demographic Change**

The course content theme of Demographic Change is found in the subjects, activities, books, and other materials that convey information intended to help rural clergy understand the issue of demographic change taking place in rural America. The course content focused on demographic changes in two general areas: population change and ethnic diversification and the social changes and social problems caused by both.

The information in the following materials formed the basis for course content theme of Demographic Changes. This material includes books, reports, and films.

#### **Materials used to teach about population change.**

- *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*, (Jung, 1998)
- *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*, (Farris, 2000)
- *Discovering Hope: Building Community in Town and Country Congregations*, (Poling-Goldenne et al., 2001)
- Flora, Cornelia Butler, and Jan L. Flora. *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change*. 2007
- *Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century*, (D. L. Brown et al., 2003)

#### **Materials used to teach about ethnic diversification**

- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. 1993b. *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*, (Evangelical Lutheran Church in, 1993b)
- *Postville: A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America*, (Bloom, 2000)
- *Understanding Rural America*, (*Understanding Rural America*, 1995)
- *Postville: USA: Surviving Diversity in Small-Town America*, (Grey, Devlin, & Goldsmith, 2009)
- *New Immigrant Settlements in Rural America: Problems, Prospects and Policies*, (Jensen & Carsey, 2006)
- *Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural America: Focus on the Midwestern States*, (Martin, Taylor, & Fix, 1996)

#### **Films used to teach about ethnic diversification**

- *Mississippi Chicken*, (Fiege, 2007)

- *Bienvenidos a Fleischmanns – An Immigrant Community in Rural America*, (Vecchione, 2009)
- *Postville: When Cultures Collides*, (Tundel, Iowa Public, & Video, 2001)

While a detailed analysis of these course materials (books, reports and films) is beyond the scope of this research, a general understanding of the content covered in these books, reports and films demonstrates how rural clergy are being prepared to work in a rural context. The following are examples of the use of course content that led to the formation of the Demographic Change course content theme.

Population change is addressed by use of the Sim's typology in three books *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry* Farris (2000), *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come* (1998), *Discovering Hope: Building Community in Town and Country Congregations* (2001). Flora and Flora also addresses population change in the typology for rural communities in the book *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change* (2008).

In each of the typologies, population change is used as a descriptive feature. For example, in Sim's Mighthavebeenville type and Flora and Flora's Rural and Remote type, population decline is occurring. Similarly in Sim's Fairview type and Flora and Flora's Amenity-Base Rapid Growth type, the population is growing.

The other area of Demographic Change included content that focused on the ethnic diversification taking place in rural communities and the social issues associated with the increased diversification. For example, two courses, *Exploring Town and Country Ministry: New Challenges for Pastoral Ministry* (Luther) and *Issues in Rural*

*Ministry—Immigration* (Wartburg) use Postville, Iowa as a case study to examine ethnic diversification. Postville, Iowa is a rural American town where a group of orthodox Jews opened up a large kosher meat processing plant. The Luther course used Stephen Bloom's book, *Postville: A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America* (2000). The Wartburg course, *Issues in Rural Ministry—Immigration* uses the film, *Postville: When Cultures Collides* (Tundel et al., 2001) and the book *Postville: USA: Surviving Diversity in Small-Town America* (Grey et al., 2009) to teach about ethnic diversification in Postville, Iowa.

The Wartburg course, *Issues in Rural Ministry—Immigration* focused specifically on the issue of immigration and used a variety of course materials including the films to deliver the content. In addition to the film *Postville: When Cultures Collides* (Tundel et al., 2001), *Mississippi Chicken* (Fiege, 2007), and *Bienvenidos a Fleischmanns – An Immigrant Community in Rural America* (Vecchione, 2009) are two films used to teach about Hispanic immigration. *Mississippi Chicken* is a film about Latin American immigrants living in rural Mississippi in order to work in the poultry industry (Fiege, 2007). *Bienvenidos a Fleischmanns – An Immigrant Community in Rural America* is a film about Latin American immigrants settling in a small town in New York (Vecchione, 2009).

The Luther course, *Changing Demographics and Economics of Rural Communities*, use of Brown and Swanson (D. L. Brown et al., 2003) makes this course stand out as an example of using content found in the Demographic Change course content theme. Brown et al. start this book with a section called "Who Lives in Rural America Today? New Directions in Population Change and Diversity." This section

covers population change and ethnic diversification through a series of articles written by experts in the fields of demography and sociology (D. L. Brown et al., 2003).

The Wartburg course, *Issues in Rural Ministry—Immigration*, from the list above uses a diversity of course material to cover content in the Demographic Change course content theme. Besides the use of films described above, the syllabus indicates the students were assigned readings from the “JSRI Occasional Paper # 21” (Martin et al., 1996). This research publication highlighted the immigration of Latin American and Asian immigrants coming to the Midwest to work in the agriculture industry (specifically meat packing).

After reexamining the syllabi following the course content analysis, the Demographic Change course content theme is exemplified and represented in the following courses:

1. *Issues in Rural Ministry—Immigration* (Wartburg)
2. *Ministering in the Town and Country Church* (TACT)
3. *Changing Demographics and Economics of Rural Communities* (Luther)
4. *Exploring Town and Country Ministry: New Challenges for Pastoral Ministry* (Luther)
5. *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry* (Luther)

## **Conclusions**

The twenty syllabi provided data from the information described in the syllabi regarding subjects and activities, as well as, textbooks, films and other materials used to

convey information during the courses. Through the analysis of the course content it became evident there was not much overlap between the course materials used in the five organizations that submitted syllabi for this research (See Appendix A. Textbooks and Films Bibliography). The wide range of course materials made it necessary to analyze the materials for common course content themes.

The seven course content themes were: The Rural Context (demographic, social, economic factors), Rural Churches (characteristics of rural churches), Rural Culture (norm, values, and attitudes typical in rural communities), Pastoral Care in a Rural Context (caring for rural people), Leadership in a Rural Context (leading rural churches and people), Agriculture and Environment (agricultural practices and sustainable environmental solutions), and Demographic Changes in Rural Areas (migration and ethnic diversification).

Of the seventy-three and sixteen films used in the courses, the following eight books were common across programs. Most (all but one) were shared in the Wartburg and Luther courses. Duke and Wartburg courses had *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography* in common. Wartburg and Luther had the following textbooks in common:

- *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*, (Farris, 2000)
- *Open Secrets: A Memoir of Faith and Discovery*, (Lischer, 2002)
- *Rural Congregational Studies: A Guide for Good Shepherds*, (Jung & Agria, 1997)

- *Discovering Hope: Building Community in Town and Country Congregations*, (Poling-Goldenne et al., 2001)
- *Rural Evangelism: Catching the Vision*, (Ruffcorn, 1994)
- *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*, (Steinke, 1993)
- *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*, (Jung, 1998)

Furthermore, when the case of Postville, Iowa was used to teach about social changes brought on by ethnic diversification in *Issues in Rural Ministry—Immigration* (Wartburg) and *Exploring Town and Country Ministry: New Challenges for Pastoral Ministry* (Luther,) different course materials were used to present the information. The Wartburg course used the film, *Postville: When Cultures Collide* (Tundel et al., 2001) and the book *Postville, U.S.A.: Surviving Diversity in Small Town America* (Grey et al., 2009), and the Luther course use *Postville: A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America* (Bloom, 2000).

The wide range of course content materials yielded a useful set of themes which can be used for comparisons of courses and programs. Table 5 provides a summary of the course content themes found in each course.

**Table 5. Course Content Themes in Each Syllabus**

Courses	Course Content Themes						
	Rural Context	Rural Churches	Rural Culture	Pastoral Care	Leadership	Ag & Envir.	Demo. Change
<b>Duke</b>							
Leading the Small RC.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Agrarian Theo.			X			X	
<b>Wartburg</b>							
Rural Plunge	X		X		X		
Ministry in RC	X	X	X		X		
Rural J-Term	X	X	X		X		
Issues RM— Immigration	X						X
Issues Econ. Displacement	X					X	
Theo. Eating:							
<b>TACT/RHMA</b>							
Pastoral Care			X	X			
Leading T&C	X	X	X		X		
Faith Comm.		X	X		X		
Ministering	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Seminar in T&C							
<b>Luther</b>							
Changing Demo. & Econ.	X	X				X	X
Foundations of (STaR) Ministry	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Exploring T&C	X		X			X	X
Leadership for Hope in (STaR)	X	X	X	X	X		
RC Organization	X			X	X		
RC Leadership	X		X		X		
<b>Saint Paul</b>							
RM/Practicum	X	X	X		X	X	

The Rural Context course content theme was the most prevalent theme, and was represented in fifteen of the twenty courses. The Rural Culture course content theme was represented in fourteen of the twenty courses, making it the second most represented theme. The Leadership course content theme represented in twelve of the courses was the third most prevalent theme.

The course content themes that were more narrowly focused on particular subjects were represented less frequently. The least represented was the Demographic Changes course content theme found in five courses. The Pastoral Care course content theme was represented in six of the courses. The course content themes that fell in the middle were Rural Churches and Agriculture and Environment represented in ten and eight courses respectively.

The analysis of the course content also revealed which themes were represented in each course. Two courses had all the course content themes presented. Those courses were *Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry* (Luther) and *Ministry in a Town and Country Church* (TACT). The Duke course, *Leading the Small, Rural Church* has all but the Demographic Changes course content theme represented. All three of these courses used a diverse slate of course content to offer the students a general overview of ministry in the rural context.

Others courses had fewer course content themes represented, which was indicative due many of the course were designed to be more narrowly focused. For example, the Wartburg course, *Issues in Rural Ministry – Economic Displacement* only

had two course content themes represented, which were Rural Context and Agriculture and Environment.

The Wartburg course *Theology of Eating: A Course in Rural Ministry and Constructive Theology* and the TACT course *Seminar in Town and Country Ministry* did not have any course content themes represented in their content. The Wartburg course *Theology of Eating: A Course in Rural Ministry and Constructive Theology*, was a very specialized course focusing on spiritual and theological aspects of food and eating especially in town and country churches (Fritschel). The textbooks and the course outline described content that fell in any of the course content themes.

The TACT course, *Seminar in Town and Country Ministry* did not contain any of the course content themes because the course was student-centered and directed. The student had to choose a topic and find at least 1500 pages of reading material to use as the course content. The student would essentially determine the course content themes represented base on the topic chosen and the course materials select for the reading.

In summary, the content analysis produced the results needed for this research. The intent was never to compare the courses and programs, but to describe the preparation of clergy for rural ministry. The course content themes provide insight about the knowledge rural clergy will carry with them into rural communities. In chapter six, some suggestions for other themes will be made.

## CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS

While living in rural communities in North Carolina, I witnessed social problems, such as poverty, the impacts of the historical racial inequality, economic and social change linked with global economic restructuring and related social and demographic changes, weakening of families structures, and educational and health inadequacies. As a rural pastor, I felt ill-equipped to help in sustainable ways that reached beyond the charity that churches are accustomed to providing. Sociological imagination, led me to the discipline of rural sociology. I began seeking ways rural churches and rural clergy could become catalysts for positive, sustainable change in rural communities that integrate the historical, economic, and social contexts and provides a framework for incorporating current sociological and community development knowledge.

This research is part of a long history of investigating the relationship of rural life and rural churches. The academic discipline of rural sociology has historically been intertwined with the study of rural churches. The historical relationship between rural sociology and studying rural churches and the current scholarship in rural sociology has shaped this research. Efforts to discover how rural clergy are being prepared to work in rural churches were examined through the lens of rural sociology. The result is an analysis that creates knowledge which can be used by educators to enhance curriculum and courses.

## **Learning From History**

In 1909, The Country Life Commission, created by President Theodore Roosevelt, set in motion the effort to transform rural America. In the report, researchers recognized the important role rural churches and rural clergy had in rural communities. These researchers were influential in forming a rural section of the American Sociological Association which eventually led to the formation of the Rural Sociological Society.

The Country Life Commission report emphasized the need for modernization in the agricultural industry but also the modernization of rural life and its social and economic structures. Sanderson stated, "The commission called for an all-out effort to 'unite the interests of education, organizations and religion into one forward movement for rebuilding rural life'" (Sanderson, 1942, p. 712) in (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 202).

Leaders in the Country Life Commission advocated for well-trained clergy in rural churches to be social change agents in rural areas. Their intention was the advancement of rural society and culture and not necessarily to help rural churches to fulfill their mission to evangelize individuals. They saw the impact of church, not on an individual level, but on a community level. The goal was for rural clergy to help develop a strong rural community structure, which was the answer to the social issues facing rural America. Stark and Finke write:

"Their agenda was not simply the renewal of rural religion or, indeed, of rural life. They had very firm notions about what kind of religion, as well as what kind of

social and economic philosophy, they wanted rural Americans to embrace” (Finke & Stark, 1992, p. 207).

The campaign for rural progress sought to gather “rural teachers, librarians, clergymen, editors, physicians and others [that] may well unite with farmers in studying and discussing the rural question in all its aspects” (Commission et al., 1909, p. 19). The effort to equip clergy for the campaign for rural progress became known as the Rural Church Movement.

Training in theology, sociology, and/or rural sociology was common among the leaders in the rural church movement. Colleges, seminaries, and denominational organizations employed these persons to train clergy for rural ministry (Madison, 1986, p. 647). Essentially, the campaign for rural progress sought to modernize and industrialize country life and rural churches and their clergy were to have a role in this transformation of rural society.

Eventually, modernization did take root in rural America. The Rural Church Movement faded as the solidifying purpose as rural progress advanced. As the transformation began, the interest and financial support for specialized training for clergy working in a rural context decreased. The land grant universities stopped offering training for rural clergy and denominations reduced funding and consolidated departments and resources.

The rural progress and modernization of rural America brought social and economic changes. This research has ultimately been about how clergy are being prepared to work in the current social and economic forces impacting rural America.

It is not clear whether the educators that submitted syllabi for this research were aware of their place in the historical context of rural clergy preparation. Their current course offerings may be a response to the market demand for training clergy who work in rural communities.

If educators and clergy have a lack of contextual understanding, then this research is more important. This research allows the opportunity to learn from history. It is better to learn from the lessons of the past than to repeat them. For example, in the book *Rural Church Movement* (1957), Mark Rich reviews the role rural church leaders played in the effort to modernize rural America. He writes,

“It seems evident that these several forces--- the social gospel, the general social interest of the times, rural sociology, the evolutionary view, and appreciation of the values in rural life—have had a strong influence on the growing rural church movement. The effect was such as to give the rural movement the social view, its distinctive mark” (Rich, 1957, p. 218).

Ironically, Rich goes on to describe that rural churches tend not to share the “social view” that gave the rural church movement its “distinctive mark.” In rural churches, “The individual, more than the group, was the important unit” according to Rich (1957). The truth Rich discovered was that context matters when developing and implementing educational efforts. The preparation of rural clergy to work in the current rural context is important to understand, as they strive to make positive contributions to rural communities throughout rural America.

## **Challenges Facing Rural Clergy Preparedness**

The challenge to adequately prepare clergy to work in a rural context is complex in nature. Throughout the analysis of each courses syllabi and course content materials, it became evident that two challenges prevailed. The first challenge deals with the perceived role clergy currently have in the dominate culture. The second issue involves the diversity and changing nature of rural communities in which these clergy are serving.

First, the role of clergy within a community is often complex and can be a hindrance in their effectiveness. This research into the training of clergy indicates clergy participating in these courses would be well prepared to perform the duties associated with leading and working in a church. Clergy have been trained to be professional church workers. The perception is that church workers manage the business of the church. They proselytize, preform weddings, bury the dead, organize charities, and provide spiritual guidance. Clergy performing this type of professional church worker role has led to a diminished capacity to help in rural communities. For example, many of the courses examined in this analysis focused on the traditional aspects of a clergy's role in the church (church leadership and pastoral care), rather than also emphasizing the expanded capacities often needed in rural communities.

In larger communities, other professionals (educators, medical personnel, business owners and workers, lawyers, and other civic and government workers) have the capability and human capital to work on community and economic development,

access to healthcare, and social problems such as poverty (beyond charity), drug abuse, and racial inequality. Conversely, the professional church worker often focuses solely on church worker duties.

Unfortunately, rural communities often suffer from the lack of specialized workers or a lack of appropriate human capital. The necessary work is done by community members with limited capacities for the work. The need for leadership and increased capacities in a broad array of fields creates an opportunity for rural clergy to get involved in their community in ways that go beyond performing the duties of a professional church worker. Expanding the role of clergy in rural communities by providing other capacities needed in rural communities allows them to be community leaders that can coach, guide, and care for rural communities undergoing social change.

Perhaps the larger challenge concerning the role of rural clergy is letting rural clergy know they are invited to the “table of concern” for rural communities. During more thriving times in rural communities, rural clergy and churches were told, “thanks but no thanks” when they attempted get involved in traditional civic or governmental areas.

The contrast found in the Country Life Commission report and the White House Rural Council report illustrates this point. Rural churches and rural clergy had a significant role in the Country Life Commission’s plan for rural progress. The White House Rural Council’s report does not mention church, faith, or religion in any way. The White House report primarily highlights the federally funded programs and initiatives from which rural communities can benefit. In fact, Gruber and Hungerman found that

government spending crowded out faith-based charitable work during the Great Depression and the implementation of the New Deal (Gruber & Hungerman, 2007).

Conditions have changed because of the current economic recession and government budgets are shrinking. The reduction of governmental social services creates more room at the “table of concern” for rural communities. The attitude now is “all hands are needed on the deck,” including rural clergy and rural churches. This attitude is reminiscent of to the time of the Rural Church Movement where it was reported by Country Life Commission,

“The entire people need to be roused to this avenue of usefulness. Most of the new leaders must be farmers who can find not only a satisfying business career on the farm, but who will throw themselves into the service of upbuilding the community. A new race of teachers is also to appear in the country. A new rural clergy is to be trained” (United States. Country Life Commission. et al., 1909, p. 19).

Rural clergy have a real opportunity to impact rural communities, if they are willing to partner with others concerned with community vitality. Consequently, rural clergy preparation programs will do a disservice to their students, if they only train them to be professional church workers, rather than active, capable community members.

The second challenge is the diversity and changes in the rural communities. The changing nature and diversity of rural communities makes it challenging for rural preparation programs to stay relevant, inclusive, and diverse in their course offerings. In general, rural clergy should be able to discern the contextual implications of working in a rural place and be able to operate with an understanding of rural culture and ethnic diversification.

As illustrated in Flora and Flora (2008), rural America is diverse and each type has its share of challenges and opportunities. It is impossible and impractical to develop training for each particular type of rural community. What is practical and necessary is to develop the capacity in rural clergy to discover, discern, and implement relevant leadership in their rural context and not just in the church.

Introducing interdisciplinary studies in a rural clergy preparation course of study would be beneficial in helping programs to remain relevant, inclusive, and diverse in their course offerings. The precedent has been established in clergy training for interdisciplinary studies. Many programs exist that combine a ministerial degree and business degree and other programs combine a ministerial degree with a social work degree.

A ministerial degree combined with a rural development, rural studies, rural sociology, or community development degree would provide the cross-disciplinary training rural clergy need to stay relevant, inclusive and diverse. For instance, in the course content material analyzed for this research, two books from the discipline of rural sociology are already being used. Those books are: *Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century* (D. L. Brown et al., 2003) and *Rural Communities : Legacy and Change* (Flora & Flora, 2008). A clergyperson entering a rural community with this broad-based knowledge and understanding about rural communities would be a strong asset to the community.

## **Opportunities for Preparing Future Rural Clergy**

Opportunities will exist to prepare future clergy to work in a rural context. These clergy will need cross-training to develop capacities that will help them recognize opportunities for work and leadership beyond the church. If cross-training through interdisciplinary educational opportunities is not possible, the rural clergy preparation programs should provide information about capacities needed in rural communities. Cross-training in other areas would help clergy better understand the context of the rural community. By increasing the knowledge base through cross-training, clergy could recognize opportunities to provide leadership in areas that would increase community viability and health.

The examination of the twenty syllabi already revealed that discovering the context is important for preparing rural clergy. Each syllabus examined had course material content used to help students understand the context in which they would work. The analysis of the course descriptions, goals and objectives produced eight courses of the Contextual course type. This means the courses were designed to give the student the information and the terms to describe and understand the context. For example, some of the course material helped students learn how to conduct a congregational/community study to enhance their understanding of their context.

Cross-trained clergy would be able to assess resources and training to build the human capital needed to meet the demands of leadership in their rural community. Resources and training are available for areas like, community development, place-

based economic development, entrepreneurial development, poverty alleviation programs, educational programs for at risk children, healthcare assess such as parish-based nurses, and practical skills for local and sustainable agriculture.

The preparedness of rural clergy would be greatly enhanced with the addition of three themes. Themes such as community economic development, civic leadership, and globalization need to be added to curriculum and resources used to prepare clergy for work in rural communities.

**Community Economic Development.** Community development often becomes economic development in rural communities. Clergy would benefit from training about community development topics, such as appreciative inquiry, action planning, community coaching, and asset-based community development. For example, clergy with skills to facilitate a community visioning session focusing on local economic development would be very helpful in many rural communities. Such training should include an introduction to the concept of social entrepreneurship. For example, if a rural church is located in a place where there is limited access to fresh healthy foods, a church could start a food co-op or farmers market. The social entrepreneurial venture could create jobs and provide access to healthy foods.

Many clergy would also benefit from community development training regarding issues found in persistent poverty areas. Of the rural types described above, rural clergy are the least prepared to work in this context. Rural clergy without the proper introduction to the issues surrounding persistence poverty will be at a disadvantage. Training in the root causes of persistent poverty would help a rural clergyperson shape

their work to help with deeper issues rather than managing the symptoms through charity work.

An example of the inclusion of discussion related to community economic development is found in the, the Duke course, *Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church*. One meeting time on Rural Asset-Based Community Development was included in the course. The description of the class states, “This will be an introduction to finding and mobilizing a rural community’s assets. Attention is given to budgeting, strategic planning and developing a mission for congregation and community which will lead to rural economic development” (Mann, Spring 2011, p. 3).

This is the only example from the twenty syllabi of rural clergy learning a skill that is not typically part of clergy responsibilities. It was one class period of instruction in a full-semester course. No course content material was provided about the topic.

**Civic Leadership.** Clergy in rural communities also have the opportunity to provide leadership in civic organizations. Training about the role of civic organizations in rural communities would also be helpful. One example is that a clergyperson may want to run for an elected position. County commissions or town councils often need leaders with increased capacity to bring effective leadership to the organization.

Training in civic leadership would also help rural clergy understand how to partner with civic organizations to accomplish community initiatives. Navigating the concerns people have with partnering with faith-based groups could be reduced if the clergyperson were also involved in other civic activities and had demonstrated an active, healthy interest in the well-being of the community.

Clergy involvement in civic leadership opportunities is a notable example of rural clergy rejoining the “table of concern.” What is needed most in this educational area is content that describes examples of healthy and beneficial clergy involvement in the civic life of the community. One resource that provides such an example is *Lending Your Leadership: How Pastors Are Redefining Their Role in Community Life* (2006), by Nelson Granade. This book is about Granade’s experience serving as a community leader at the same time he was serving as a pastor in a small town in North Carolina.

Another avenue of building civic leadership capacity is to take advantage of leadership training opportunities within the county or town of residence. Many counties or small towns offer capacity building/orientation type training as a way to introduce new leaders to various governmental functions and institutions. Often the participants are business leaders, new government officials, or leaders of community organizations. A clergyperson would benefit from the social networking and the introduction to civic leadership.

**Globalization.** The world is connected through trade, migration, and information. Reading books like *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (Friedman, 2005) would provide a good introduction to the impacts of globalization. Global trade agreements impact manufacturing dependent counties. Furthermore, even if a rural community is still dependent on commodity agriculture, global markets determine prices for corn, soybeans, wheat and beef. Clergy who understand global trade and its effects on rural communities would be an asset in many

rural communities. Understanding issues with global trade could provide a capacity to advocate for public policy that would benefit local rural communities.

Rural clergy preparation would be enhanced by understanding migration patterns. The Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire provides excellent resources in this area. Migration patterns are impacted by global events. Economic opportunity can bring people from around the world to rural communities. Also, conflicts in other nations can create situations where political refugees need to relocate. Clergy who have a global perspective could help rural residents discuss changes such as these and how the church and community can and should respond.

If these three themes are added to the seven course content themes already discovered, clergy would be better prepared to work in a rural context. These ten course content themes would allow a clergy person to not only be an effective church leader, but also an effective and valuable asset to a rural community.

### **Future Research**

The logical next step in this research would be to survey students of these programs. The survey would probe for information about their preparedness for working in a rural context. It would assess if they pursued additional training or began to work in rural communities as a result of their training. The research would assess their community activities outside their official church worker duties.

Other research could be done on whether a student's hometown context impacts tenure rates of first ministry placements. The hypothesis would be that rural

identified clergy would have a longer tenure in first churches in a rural community than a non-rural identified clergy. This may or may not be the case, so an inquiry into this topic would provide insight on ministry placements.

Additional research could be done in determining ways faith-based organizations are partnering with other rural community stakeholders to develop stronger rural communities. This type of study would result in a best practices type of report to be used as examples for future partnerships and collaborations.

Another aspect of rural clergy preparation is helping train rural residents engaged in ministry. Training institutions should focus not only on providing training for clergy going into rural areas, but there should also be an avenue of providing material and resources for people from these rural communities who are called serve as clergy in local churches.

In the 1980's and 1990's, rural sociologists and rural church experts affiliated with the Rural Church Network developed an entire set curriculum and training materials for the purpose of continuing education of rural clergy. The material was titled of "Rural Social Science Education." The training was designed to be delivered through a trained facilitator in face to face format. The members of the Rural Church Network have expressed interest in reviving this training material in the form of an online resource. The discoveries made in this research would enhance the updating of this material. This may be the very place where the new knowledge and understanding gained in this research is applied.

## **Closing Remarks**

I have enjoyed the journey into the world of rural sociology, specifically in how the study of rural sociology and community development can impact rural clergy preparedness and further enhance and enrich rural communities. The educators providing the syllabi and other materials are on the frontlines of equipping clergy to make positive impacts in the rural communities where they work. I am grateful to them for sharing their work with me and allowing the insight from their work to be a catalyst for improving rural preparation for future clergy.

My motivations for conducting this research come from the personal conviction that people who have a relationship with God can make good citizens in communities. Clergy and their congregations should come alongside others in the community, roll up their sleeves, and become engaged in the work needed to assist the community in meeting its desire to provide a good life and a hope filled future for its residents.

Essentially, the essence of what was written in the Country Life Commission at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century about rural clergy still rings true today:

“The country pastor must be a community leader. He [or She] must know the rural problems. He [or She] must have sympathy with rural ideals and aspirations. He [or She] must love the country. He [or She] must know country life, the difficulties that the farmer has to face in his business, some of the great scientific revelations made in behalf of agriculture, the great industrial forces at work for the making or the unmaking of the farmer, the fundamental social problems of the life of the open country.

Consequently, the rural pastor must have special training for his work. Ministerial colleges and theological seminaries should unite with agricultural colleges in this preparation of the country clergyman. There should be better financial support for the clergyman; in many country

districts it is pitifully small. There is little incentive for a man [or woman] to stay in a country parish, and yet this residence is just what must come about. Perhaps it will require an appeal to the heroic young men [or women], but we must have more men [or women] going into the country pastorates not as a means of getting a foothold but as a permanent work. The clergyman has an excellent chance for leadership in the country. In some sections he [or she] is still the dominating personality. But everywhere he [or she] may become one of the great community leaders. He [or She] is the key to the country church problem" (Commission et al., 1909, p. 144).

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## APPENDIX B. SYLLABI INCLUDED IN SAMPLE

### **Duke Divinity School (United Methodist)**

Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church, Spring 2011, W. Joseph Mann—3 pages, 7 textbooks, Full Semester, A Professional Skills Development Course (Mann, Spring 2011)  
Agrarian Theology for an Urban World, Spring 2010, Norman Wirzba—3 pages, 7 textbooks, Full Semester, An Issue Specific Course (Wirzba, Spring 2010)

### **Wartburg Seminary (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)**

Rural Plunge Weekend, Fall 2010, Ann Fritschel—2 pages, 6 textbooks Intensive Weekend, A Contextual Course (Fritschel, Fall 2010)  
Ministry in Rural Context, No Date, Ann Fritschel—3 pages, 6 textbooks Intensive Four Weeks, A Contextual Course (Fritschel)  
Rural J-Term 2011, Ann Fritschel—4 pages, 13 textbooks Intensive January Term, A Contextual Course (Fritschel, 2011b)  
Issues in Rural Ministry—Immigration, No Date, Ann Fritschel—2 pages, 4 textbooks Intensive Four Weeks, An Issue Specific Course (Fritschel, 2011a)  
Exploring Contemporary Rural Issues Through Film—Economic Displacement, No Date, Ann Fritschel—2 pages, 1 textbook Intensive Four Weeks, An Issue Specific Course (Fritschel)  
Theology of Eating: A Course in Rural Ministry and Constructive Theology, No Date, Ann Fritschel—2 pages, 5 textbooks Full Semester, An Issue Specific Course (Fritschel)

### **TACT/Rural Home Missionary Association (Evangelical)**

Pastoral Care in the Town and Country Context, No Date, Ron Klassen—3 pages, 5 textbooks Intensive One Week, A Professional Skills Development Course (Klassen)  
Leading the Town and Country Church, No Date, Ron Klassen—3 pages, 5 textbooks Intensive One Week, A Professional Skills Development course (Klassen)  
Faith Communication in the Town and Country Context, Barney Wells—4 pages, 5 textbooks Intensive One Week, A Professional Skills Development course (Wells)  
Ministering in the Town and Country Church, Ron Klassen—4 pages, 4 textbooks Intensive One Week, A Contextual Course (Klassen)  
Seminar in Town and Country Ministry, Ron Klassen—4 pages 1500 pages required Intensive One Week, An Issue Specific Course (Klassen)

### **Luther Seminary (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)**

Changing Demographics and Economics of Rural Communities, Spring 2007, Alvin Luedke—4 pages, 8 textbooks Full Semester, A Contextual Course (Luedke, Spring 2007)  
Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry, Fall 2010, Alvin Luedke—4 pages, 7 textbooks Full Semester, A Contextual Course (Luedke, Fall 2010)  
Exploring Town and Country Ministry: New Challenges for Pastoral Ministry, Fall 2009 Alvin Luedke—5 pages, 6 textbooks Full Semester, A Contextual Course (Luedke)

Leadership for Hope in Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministries, Spring 2010, Alvin Luedke—4 pages, 5 textbooks Eight Week Quarter, A Professional Skills Development Course (Luedke, Spring 2010)

Rural Church Organization, Fall 2008, Alvin Luedke—3 pages, 5 textbooks Eight Week Quarter, A Professional Skills Development Course (Luedke, Fall 2008)

Rural Church Leadership, Spring 2011, Alvin Luedke—4 pages, 6 textbooks Eight Week Quarter, A Professional Skills Development Course (Luedke, Spring 2011)

**Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity (Roman Catholic)**

Rural Ministry/Practicum, January Term 2010 James F. Ennis, Facilitator—4 pages, 0 textbooks Intensive Five Days, A Contextual Course (Ennis, January Term 2010)

## Duke Divinity School (United Methodist)

### SYLLABUS

PARISH 151 - Leading the Small Membership, Rural Church

Spring Semester 2011

W. Joseph Mann, Instructor

This course will focus on the ministry of churches in rural and small town America. Consideration will be given to the changes occurring in rural settings and the way these changes affect rural churches. The course will endeavor to help the student understand the nature of the small membership church and how it functions. Areas to be included will be a theological and sociological understanding of the rural church, administration of small membership churches, issues of staffing and denominational relationships, and methods of congregational and community analysis.

#### **Required Reading**

Jason Byassee, The Gifts of the Small Church, (Abingdon)

William H. Willimon and Robert L. Wilson, Preaching and Worship in the Small Church, (Abingdon, 1980) paperback.\*

Ronald A. Heifetz, Leadership Without Easy Answer, (Belnap Press of Harvard Press)\*

Carl S. Dudley, Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-first Century, (Abingdon)\*

Kathleen Norris, Dakota: A Spiritual Geography, paperback

Ammerman, Carroll, Dudley, McKinney, Studying Congregations – A New Handbook, (Abingdon)\*

Wilson, Robert L., The Multi-Church Parish, (Abingdon). Do not buy, to be distributed in class.

**\* COPIES OF THE ABOVE BOOKS WITH AN ASTERISK HAVE BEEN PUT ON RESERVE IN THE LIBRARY.**

#### **Assignments:**

1. Students will be responsible for the material in the books listed as required reading. A list of class topics and readings follows. Students should read these sections prior to class.

2. Each student is to do an analysis of a town and country church. A study guide is provided. Students should confer with the instructor during the first two weeks concerning the project.

The project is due April 6.

3. There will be a closed book, take-home, final exam, handed out April 13<sup>th</sup> and turned in April 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Grade:**

The grade will be determined by class participation (students showing mastery of material in discussion), the project and the final exam. Students must be aware that the major project and final exam, the major portion of ones grade, come at the end of the term.

**Class Topics and Reading Assignments**

January 19 An introduction to the course. Particular attention will be given to the nature and purpose of the church with an emphasis on the Town and Country or rural church. What are the peculiar aspects of the identity of the Town and Country church? The course project to study a local church will be discussed. There will be an examination of Carl Dudley's notions of a single-cell church. How do single-cell churches work? What is important about them? What are challenges for you as a minister in such settings?

**Read:** Effective Small Churches, pp. 1-80; The Gifts of the Small Church.

January 26 The ecology of the rural church: a look at community and the church. What is the community like for rural churches, and how do churches relate to the community? What is the context for ministry in rural places? How churches are properly part of community problem solving? View the film, "Vernon, Fla." in class.

**Read:** Studying Congregations, pp. 7-78

February 2 An examination of leadership in rural churches. How do we understand the various roles of clergy, laity and other community persons as leaders? What is the nature of authority? How do you help churches move to adaptive change? What is transformative leadership?

**Read:** Leadership Without Easy Answers, (pp. 1-150)

February 9 An examination of leadership in rural churches (continued)

**Read:** Leadership Without Easy Answers ( pp. 150-250)

February 16 The importance of worship and sacraments in the rural church. Why is worship central to the life and identity of the rural church? What are the opportunities and challenges for worship in small membership churches?

**Guest:** Jennifer Thomas and Lee Roger Owens, Co-pastors, Duke Memorial UMC

**Read:** Preaching and Worship in the Small Church

February 22 A look at strategic planning: the ministry of goals and purposes. This will be an introduction to why and how to do strategic planning in the rural church, and how do you measure results. Budgeting and its relationship to planning will be discussed.

**Read:** Effective Small Churches, pp. 155-196

March 2 A look at the resources of a rural church; strategies for clergy support; multiple church settings. What are the special challenges for a pastor in a multiple

church setting and how to manage in such a complex parish?

**Read:** The Multi-Church Parish (handout)

March 9 Spring break—No Class

March 16 What is life on the farm like? What is the relationship of agriculture, farming, care for the land and the church? Meet with a rural church pastor and visit Anathoth Gardens to look at sustainable agricultural practices.

**Class meets at Cedar Grove UMC, Cedar Grove, NC.**

**Guest: Megan Cornet, Garden Director, Cedar Grove UMC**

**Read:** Dakota: A Spiritual Geography

March 23 Rural Asset Based Community Development: From the Ground up. This will be an introduction to finding and mobilizing a rural community's assets. Attention is given to budgeting, strategic planning and developing a mission for congregation and community will lead to rural economic development.

**Guest:** Robb Webb, Director, Rural Church, The Duke Endowment

**Read:**

March 30 Pastoral care in small membership churches. How to provide care where resources are challenged?

What will become of small membership churches? A look at recent analysis of congregations, their relative size, advantages and disadvantages of small membership churches.

**Read:** Articles from **Reflection Magazine** (handed out);

April 6 **Projects Due**

Class presentations of projects

April 13 Class presentations of projects

**Take-home exam handed out**

April 20 Last day of classes

**Take-home exam due**

**Parish 245 / Christian Theology 220**  
**Agrarian Theology for an Urban World**

Spring 2010  
Time: T 2:30-5  
Office Hours: Th 1:30-3  
                  M/W 2-3pm

Instructor: Norman Wirzba  
Office: 211B Gray  
Phone: 660-3496  
Email: [nwirzba@div.duke.edu](mailto:nwirzba@div.duke.edu)

**Description & Purpose:**

For millennia of human history societies have been agrarian in their economies and cultural outlook. Though cities existed too, agrarian realities and responsibilities were ever-present. That has changed in the wake of industrial and global urbanization. Today's urban economies and cultural priorities increasingly show little interest in agrarian concerns. How does this unprecedented cultural shift affect the way we think about Christian faith? That is the central question for this course.

A farmer or pastoralist is likely to think differently about theological matters than today's urbanite. Location and occupation are important because *where* one is and *what* one is doing there open up lines of vision, sympathy, and questioning, as well as parameters for reflection. Farmers think differently about the world and its life because their practical experiences, particularly their interaction with land, plants, and animals, as well as the specific character of their work patterns, compel questions and responses that may not arise for a person living in an urban, industrial world.

This class will consider how the character of modern industrial, technological, consumer, and urban cultures has given shape to and directed particular kinds of theological reflection. We will then examine how an agrarian position differs and what this difference means for our thinking about creation, God, salvation, and the nature and mission of the church. This course will encourage students to read scripture, and thus reinterpret theological motifs, with an agrarian point of view in mind. We will spend considerable time first exploring agrarian sympathies and responsibilities (both ancient and contemporary) so that we can then draw a contrast with current urban perspectives. Our aim is not to vilify urbanism but to see how an agrarian critique can transform urbanism into something that more closely resembles God's heavenly Jerusalem, a city that embodies key agrarian elements. We will also explore critiques of agrarianism and challenges to its future vitality.

**Texts:**

Ellen F. Davis. *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture* (Cambridge University Press)  
Wendell Berry. *The Art of the Commonplace* (Counterpoint)  
Norman Wirzba, ed. *The Essential Agrarian Reader* (Counterpoint)  
Gary Holthaus. *From the Farm to the Table* (University Press of Kentucky)  
Lord Northbourne. *Of the Land & the Spirit* (World Wisdom)

Joel Shuman & Roger Owens, eds. *Wendell Berry and Religion* (University Press of Kentucky)

Wes Jackson. *Becoming Native to This Place* (Counterpoint)

### **Course Format:**

This course will combine lecture and seminar formats. I will take time introducing themes for consideration, but I will expect you to come to class prepared to discuss readings assigned for each class session.

### **Course Requirements:**

Students must come to class having read the material beforehand. Weekly readings will form the basis for our discussion.

Each student will have the opportunity to lead the discussion in class for one hour. As part of your responsibility, your task will be to summarize the key points and themes of the weekly reading. You will then lead the rest of the class in a time of vigorous questioning and theme development. On the day you lead the class, bring a written copy of your summary (1-2 pages) and a list of the important questions you think need to be addressed. (20% total for the presentation and the overall quality of class preparedness and discussion)

Essay 1 – You will write a 10-page essay in which you develop an agrarian critique of some aspect of today’s culture (for example, food, technology, work, economy, education, or entertainment). The aim of this essay is to help you digest the key insights of an agrarian understanding. (30% of final grade)

Essay 2 – You will write a 15-page essay in which you develop a Christian doctrine or teaching (such as the nature of God, Christ, Holy Spirit, Church, salvation, faith, etc.) in light of an agrarian position. This essay must be carefully argued and demonstrate an awareness of how an agrarian account differs from a theological account not so informed. The purpose of this essay is for you to see how agrarianism makes a contribution to the life and teaching of the church. (50% of final grade)

### **Course Policies:**

Academic Honesty – Members of the class are expected to abide by the “Conduct Covenant and Judicial Procedures” as printed in the 2009-2010 Bulletin, pp.174-180. In accordance with the Honor Code, students are expected to do their own work for each of the assignments. Any violation of the Honor Code will result in a failing grade, and depending on the severity of the case could result in additional consequences.

Students are expected to use Inclusive Language in their assignments as described in the Bulletin, pp. 172-174.

Late work will not be accepted under any except the most serious circumstances. It is imperative that you be in conversation with me the moment you find yourself in a problem situation. Otherwise, you risk a grade of zero for the assignment.

Disability Statement – Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Management

System—Student Access Office at 668-1267 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. Please also contact Rev. Todd Maberry, Divinity Registrar ([tmaberry@div.duke.edu](mailto:tmaberry@div.duke.edu) or 660-3428), to assist with the process.

Incompletes will not be given except in extreme circumstances.

Grading System:       A = 93-100

A- = 90-92

B+ = 88-89

B = 83-87

B- = 80-82

C+ = 78-79

C = 73-77

C- = 70-72

D+ = 68-69

D = 60-67

F = 0-59

**Course Schedule:**

January 19 – Introductions – What is Agrarianism? (Berry – Intro, Holthaus, Wirzba – Intro)

January 26 – From Agrarianism to Agribusiness (Berry – Part II, Wirzba – 6, 7)

February 2 – Agrarian Principles (Berry – Part III, “A Statement of Principles” [Twelve Southerners])

February 9 – Agrarian Principles (Wirzba – 1, 2, 8, Northbourne – 1-5)

February 16 – Reading Scripture (Davis – Intro, Ch. 1 & 2, “The Land” [Walter Brueggemann])

February 23 – Catholic Agrarianism (Shuman – 11) Guest Presenter

March 2 – Creation (Davis – Ch. 3 & 4, Northbourne – 16, “The Drama of Soil” [Norman Wirzba])

March 9 – READING WEEK

March 16 – Economy (Davis – Ch. 5 & 6, Berry – Part IV, Wirzba – 4)

March 23 – Community (Jackson, “The Common Life” [Scott Russell Sanders], “Dwelling” [Deborah Tall], “The Rootless Professors” [Eric Zencey], “Pseudo-Communities” [David Ehrenfeld])

March 30 – Church (Shuman – 3, 4, 10, 14)

April 6 – Prophetic Mission (Davis – Ch. 7, Wirzba – 10, 13, 14, “Standing by Words” [Wendell Berry])

April 13 – A New City (Davis – Ch. 9, Wirzba – 11, 12, Shuman – 6, “River of Life in God’s New Jerusalem” [Barbara Rossing])

April 20 – Incarnating Faith (Davis Ch. 8, Berry – Part V, Wirzba 5, 15, Shuman 9, 13)

## **Wartburg Seminary (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)**

### **MN 195T/595T RURAL PLUNGE WEEKEND – FALL 2010**

Instructor: Ann Fritschel

1 credit hour - credit/no credit only

Rural Ministry distribution elective; open to all

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This weekend has been developed to expose seminarians to small/rural communities and churches. The weekend involves leaving Friday afternoon around 3:30 and returning Sunday afternoon. Activities include staying with farm/rural families, touring farms and processing plants, a supper at Jefferson Prairie Lutheran Church with host families, and participation in Sunday worship service and discussions. The host churches are located in the Clinton, Wisconsin area.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

To allow students to experience the dynamics of a rural community and congregation.

To encourage students to think about the role of the pastor of a congregation in a town and country setting.

To initiate students into a different cultural context.

#### **M.DIV. CURRICULAR GOALS FULFILLED BY THIS COURSE:**

Meets the following objectives:

#6 To foster an ability to engage contemporary theological and ethical issues with insight and humility.

#7 Develop an ability to evangelize the world with faithfulness and contextual sensitivity.

#8 To promote and equip students to live and minister joyfully and faithfully as part of my denomination and the ecumenical church.

#10 To learn how to lead and nurture congregations to promote peace and justice in the public arena and encourage the witness and service of the church in mission to the world.

#11 To learn how to integrate theology and practice in all areas of life and ministry.

To a lesser extent, the Rural Plunge also meets goals #1 and #9 as well.

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Attend the weekend and both pre & post-trip meetings. (65%)

Read ONE of the books listed in the bibliography.

Write a six-page critical theological response to some aspect of the weekend incorporating comments about the book read, and suggesting implications for ministry. (35%)

HAVE FUN!!!

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Wendell Berry, *Jaybar Crow*  
Lawrence Farris, *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*  
Richard Lischer, *Open Secrets*  
Kathleen Norris, *Dakota*  
Merton P. Strommen, *The Innovative Church*  
Miriam Brown, *Sustaining Heart in the Heartland*

#### WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT:

Addendum to the assignment for the Rural Plunge Paper

While listening to and conversing with the folks with whom you stay and are with during the weekend see if you can discern what they think are the big challenges that face them in their community and vocation right now. Are there local issues or controversies about which folks are concerned and talking? If you were a pastor in this context how might you minister to and with the people around these issues? As you listen to the folks what comes across most clearly from them?

Find at least one article in a local or regional paper concerning an issue of rural life and reflect on how it might be seen in terms of a ministry that honors the strategies of both law and gospel.

Describe how you encountered God's presence among the people you were with and where you have seen or heard of God's activity in Christ in the places that were visited.

On basis of the book you read address these questions:

What makes this book good and useful for on who is considering rural or Small town ministry? Did your reading encourage you to want to be called to ministry in the setting so described?

Share one new insight or creative idea you gained from this book.

What would you challenge in the author's theological perspective?

It is Seminary policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disability conditions that may affect

their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students are responsible for informing their instructor of any documented disability by the end of the first week of class or upon subsequent diagnosis. Documentation on disability conditions is to be kept on file with the Dean of Students office.

Revised 8.24.06

## **MN295T/695T. Ministry in Rural Context**

### **Objectives:**

1. The primary objective of this course is simply to encourage you to think about what it would mean to do ministry in a rural setting. The primary insight that will enable you to do great ministry is that the rural U.S., in spite of all its similarities to urban U.S., is still a different culture; each setting is different; and the pastor would do well to recognize that she or he needs to learn from the people there.
2. To reflect on the question, "What is the role of the pastor in a rural community and congregation?" This is of course dependent on and implies a great deal about the role of laity, and what people really believe the church to be.
3. To introduce all participants to the notion of congregational studies which can be of immense value in understanding the congregation to which you are/will be called.

### **Requirements:**

Attendance and vigorous participation.

Each student is to write a five-page paper. There are a number of important theological foci for rural ministry. Please select one of the following topics:

a Christian doctrine of change or transformation;  
what the doctrine of the Trinity suggest about contextual—especially rural—ministry;

the understanding of Christ and culture in rural America;

the mission of the church—especially the rural church;

the vocation of the pastor and of the laity vis-à-vis each other and the whole body;

a theological justification for considering the importance of context; OR

the role of the church in the emerging rural crisis/opportunity.

In each case please focus first on the theology of the topic and then reflect for at least a page and a half on the practical ministry implications of your reflection. Length: 5 pages. You might want to do a congregational case study, focusing on the topic. (a resource: [www.christianleaders.org](http://www.christianleaders.org)).

You might also organize your reflections in two groups: conclusions—what you are pretty definite about, and questions—areas in which you see it will be important to know more.

Other topics include: evangelism in rural America; the role of vision in rural congregations; possible learnings from parachurch organizations and/or retreat-renewal movements.

### **3. Read:**

Shannon Jung and Mary Agria, Rural Congregational Studies: A Guide for Good Shepherds, Abingdon, 1997.

### **4. AND read one of the following:**

David Poling-Goldene and Shannon Jung, Discovering Hope: Building Community in

Town and Country Congregations, Augsburg Fortress 2000.

Easum, William and Bandy, Thomas. Growing Spiritual Redwoods. Abingdon Press

1997. **OR**

Tony Pappas. Entering the World of the Small Church. Alban Institute, 1988. **OR**

David Ray. The Big Small Church Book. Pilgrim Press, 1992. **OR**

Tisdale, Leonora Tubbs. Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art. Augsburg Fortress, 1997.

5. Read one other book during your research or three articles pertaining to your issue.

A note on the papers: I encourage you to tackle issues that are real to you; usually there will be a rural spin or twist on that as well. We will spend some time thinking about this in class.

### **Schedule of Classes**

#### **October 25: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT**

##### **Introduction**

Introductory Remarks

Objectives, organization of the course

Approaching rural ministry—emerging issues

Individual or team topics

A case study in leadership—empowering leadership: what is the role of

the pastor? Of the laity?

The nature of congregational studies

Assignment: Jung and Agria, pp. 11-56

David Ray, The Big Small Church Book or Pappas, Entering—first half. or Tisdale, Preaching...(first half), or Easum/Bandy, first half).

#### **November 1: CONTEXT, IDENTITY AND PROCESS**

**Guest Speaker: Bishop Paulo Akyoo, Tanzania—**

A Different Rural Context: Land and Agriculture

**Case from Rural Congregational Studies,**

Ann Morrison, pp. 1-4 Vocation and call.

Rural context and rural congregation

##### **How does one do ministry in rural context?**

A comparison of values: modern urban society in contrast to traditional rural society.

##### **How does the rural church move from maintenance to mission?**

**(identity)**

The success trap

Redefining church as mission

Locating identity -- between theology and experience.

**Decision-making as the key to process (but not all of process)**

Arland Rothaug's (Arlin Rothauge) typology of churches

Clergy-laity relationships and understandings of power

Conflicts and disagreement

Assignment: Jung & Agria, pp 57-99

Finish Ray or Pappas or Tisdale or Easum/Bandy

**Nov 8: CONTEXT IMPACTS PREACHING.**

**PROGRAM -- ACTIVITIES OF THE CHURCH**

Meet at Hadley Auditorium, Tech Center at the University of Dubuque

**How context impacts ministry: the case of preaching.**

Guest instructor--Dr. Marsha Wilfong

**How do rural congregations program for their lives?**

Relational or program -- is this stereotype true?

Evangelism in rural America

**Integrating the congregational studies model.**

Does the congregation express its identity in its program?

Assignment: Jung and Agria, pp 99-140.

Find and read resources for your paper.

**November 15: Summing Up**

**How should the rural congregation move into the future?**

(Clues from Loren Mead, other rural centers, and YOU.)

Class members report on some of their findings.

**YOUR PAPERS ARE DUE AND SHOULD BE READY TO SHARE IN CLASS.**

**(Note: The Center for Theology and Land is designed to access resources from and for rural ministry not only during your seminary career but into the future. We will more nearly carry out God's mission if we do it together. Thus this is an invitation to future participation and shaping of the CTL as students and as persons working in congregations.)**

## **MN 397T/697T RURAL J-TERM 2011**

Instructors: Rev. Dr. Ann Fritschel and a host of pastors and lay people

Grades: CR/NC unless you need a letter grade.

### OBJECTIVES:

To introduce participants to the dynamics impacting rural communities and church members and the unchurched. (the relation of Christianity to culture)

To encourage participants to think theologically about evangelism and mission in rural America and in congregations. (the mission of the church – and the role of clergy and of lay people in furthering that mission)

To offer participants some categories towards the goal of understanding rural congregations and communities and how they can lead and encourage the ministry of the laity in those congregations ( the contextual and local nature of theology); and

To allow participants to **experience** the pain and joy of rural people and their churches.

### REQUIREMENTS:

Vigorous participation in the seminars and immersion trip of the course.

Read the required texts: Jung, Boehm, Cronin, Farley, Freudenberger, Heffernan, LaBlanc, Queen, & Ruesink, *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*.

Richard Lischer, *Open Secrets*.

At least two additional books (or six articles at a minimum) related to your own or group project. Suggested book titles are listed below. Instructor approval necessary for other titles.

David Ray, *Wonderful Worship in Smaller Churches*

David Ray, *The Indispensable Guide to Smaller Churches*

Nora Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*, Augsburg Fortress, 1997.

Hein-Frye Lectures 2001, *Currents in Theology and Mission--* lectures by Karen Bloomquist and Tex Sample.

Tony Pappas, *Inside the Small Church*, Alban, 2000 .

Tony Pappas, *Entering the World of the Small Church*. 1988 or revised edition.

Roy D. Phillips, *Letting Go: Transforming Congregations for Ministry*. Albin, 2003.

Kennon L. Callahan, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, Harper & Row, 1983 (or latest ed.).

Kevin E. Ruffcorn, *Rural Evangelism: Catching the Vision*, Augsburg Fortress, 1994.

Peter L. Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*. Alban Institute, 1993.

Merton Strommen, *Innovative Church: Seven Steps to Positive Change in Your Congregation*. Augsburg, 1997.

An 8 page paper exploring an issue at the heart of doing rural ministry, chosen by participants in consultation with the class, which she or he is wrestling with -- thus, a real live issue, and which she or he is responsible to present in a brief, but interesting, way during some portion of the concluding seminar. Creative alternatives are encouraged (equivalent to the paper) but **all projects are encouraged to push the edges of your knowledge, wisdom, insight, and thoughtfulness. Due: Wednesday, January 31.**

Some suggestions:

Musical composition; a power point presentation; a set of modern parables;  
rural youth ministry and Christian practices;  
the values of the community school and the church in a rural community;  
the articulation of a central, theological image for rural ministry;  
locating the sources of the anti-rural bias (where it exists);  
the assets and liabilities of globalization;  
the future of the church in economically challenged areas;  
a theological articulation of the way to approach rural ministry as a locale where God is present (What difference does it make to ministering to the unchurched in rural America; assume that God is indeed present in rural America?)  
gifts of women to the rural church (big Harvard study of women in ministry)  
hog lots as a theological issue;  
the assets and liabilities for rural youth -- how can the church be family?  
the relationship between soil and soul;  
how to do evangelism with the unchurched in rural America;  
**OR** some other vital topic of your choosing with the shaping of the seminar group.

### Schedule:

**Monday, Jan. 8. 2:30 sharp Meet at Wartburg, in the back upper parking lot off Fremont. Leave for La Crosse. Supper in La Crosse. Amtrak trip. There will be an orientation during the train ride on Sunday night.**

\*\*Please read chapters 7 & 9 of **Open Secrets** prior to departure.  
Begin reading **Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come**.  
Imagine that you were revising this book (Rural Ministry: Shape of the Renewal of Come) in light of your experience; What would you retain?  
What would you drop? What would you add?  
Think about your projects.

Tuesday, Jan. 9 Wake up in Minot, N.D.  
There will probably be a series of presentations at a church in Minot until early or mid afternoon.

We will be assigned host families and host pastors/churches and will leave with them.

Sunday, Jan. 14      Worship in host congregation. Return to Minot, Sunday afternoon.  
Debriefing at the church.  
Re-board the train. Return to Dubuque from La Crosse.

Monday, Jan. 15      Disembark at La Crosse in the morning, drive back to Dubuque.  
Sunday Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> or Monday, Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> on the train return trip

Debriefing our experience in North Dakota. Bring your questions.

**Questions for reflection:**

What did you experience, and how do you interpret what you saw?  
Where and how did you see God?  
Where and how did you see sin?  
What significant lessons did you learn with theological implications?  
What does the experience have to do with God, and God's interaction with the World?  
What does the experience have to do with the church, or the church with the experience?  
How will this experience impact your expectations of the church and Mission?

**Assignment:** Get some well needed rest! ☺

Tuesday, Jan. 16      2-5pm - Seminar meets in Afton Lounge

Exploring the context of rural America  
Thinking theologically about the context  
Pedagogy and Other Sub-cultures

**Assignment:** Have selected your project bibliography. Come to class with a description of the project.

Have finished *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*. Be prepared to discuss.

Thursday, Jan. 18      2-5pm - Seminar meets in Afton Lounge

Theology of the Rural Church  
Models of, models for the church, Models of ministry  
Clergy-laity interaction and leadership

**Assignment:** Read ancillary book or books and articles. Report on your issue.

Tuesday, Jan. 23      2-5pm - Seminar meets in Afton Lounge

In-class reports & activities (dance, music, feasting, collage, scrapbooking, or whatever you come up with).

**Assignment: Finish projects.**

Wednesday, January 31

Papers or Projects Due to the Center for Theology and Land office. Students can send through campus mail.

Early February?? J-Term Displays and Presentations

Presentations on the North Dakota experience to the Interim Group at Wartburg. Save all photos, memorabilia, etc. for display.

**Syllabus Notes:**

Without a legitimate reason, all work is due as scheduled.

Absences and extensions can be discussed.

All work should be done by the individual, unless teamwork is either explicitly invited and/or also explicitly articulated on papers.

Cheating is, of course, not acceptable.

Dress code: decent clothing and enough of it. Remember it is January and we will be in North Dakota.

Subject to Change Clause: This syllabus, course calendar and other attending documents are subject to change during the semester.

It is Seminary policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disability conditions that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students are responsible for informing their instructor of any documented disability by the end of the first week of class or upon subsequent diagnosis. Documentation on disability conditions is to be kept on file with the Dean of Students office.

NOTE please: This syllabus is as complete as possible at the moment. However, part of an immersion trip is that things change. Be prepared to change. Peace!

### *Accommodations Policy*

It is Seminary policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disability conditions that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students are responsible for informing their instructor of any documented disability by the end of the first week of class or

upon subsequent diagnosis. Documentation on disability conditions is to be kept on file in the Dean of Students office.

Revised 1.3.07

## **MN 294 – ISSUES in RURAL MINISTRY – IMMIGRATION**

**Cr/NCr only**

**Instructor: Ann Fritschel**

**Office: Fritschel 308**

### Course Description

This course explores the changing nature of rural communities as different ethnic, social class and age groups immigrate into rural communities. Documentaries and readings help focus the discussion around understanding different facets of the issues of rural immigration. The last week focuses on discussing biblical, theological and ecclesiastical resources for equipping congregations and community leaders to deal with change in healthy and missional ways.

### Goals of the Course

This course is designed to help students:

Gain an understanding of contemporary rural contexts by focusing on one issue.

Explore the issues surrounding rural immigration.

Evaluate the arguments put forward by supporters and opponents of rural immigration.

Gain a beginning understanding of the process of change in rural communities.

Evaluate ecclesiastical resources for equipping congregations and communities to deal with rural immigration.

Develop biblical and theological resources for addressing change in rural and small town settings.

### Pastoral Practices

The instructor aims to foster especially these pastoral practices in this course

Practice of Curiosity

Practice of Complex Analysis

Practice of Immersion in Context

Practice of Biblical and Theological Wisdom

### Requirements

Attendance and active participation in class. As a module, it is important to attend all classes. Students may make up one class with permission of the instructor.

Reading of all assigned materials and viewing of all films.

Completion of a five page paper on biblical and theological resources for addressing the issue of rural immigration. A summary of this paper is to be shared in class.

### Evaluation

Class Participation 40%

Paper 60%

It is seminary policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disability conditions that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students are responsible for informing their instructor of any documented disabilities by the end of the first

week of class or upon subsequent diagnosis. Documentation on disability conditions is to be kept on file with the Dean of Students office.

**Policy Regarding Use of Internet During Class**

The use of the internet during class sessions is limited to tools directly and immediately applicable to the lecture/discussion of any particular day. Texting, twittering, tweeting, browsing e-mail, playing games, and any other non-class related use of the internet during class sessions is prohibited. The instructor reserves the right to deny class time computer access to students who fail to follow this policy.

**Course Assignments**

Week 1 – Understanding the Culture/Values of the Rural Context and Introduction to Rural Immigration

Understanding Rural America, ERS/USDA Ag Info Bulletin #710

Film – Rural Ministry in the 90's

Film – Postville: When Cultures Collide

Readings from the book Postville, U.S.A.: Surviving Diversity in Small Town USA, chapters 1 & 2 (11-34) and chapter 9 (139-159)

Week 2 – Ethnic Immigration

New Immigrant Settlements in Rural America: Problems, Prospects and Policies

Film – Mississippi Chicken

JSRI Occasional Paper #21 – Immigration and the changing Face of Rural America: Focus on the Midwestern States (Julian Samora Research Institute –Michigan State University)

Week 3 – Ethnic Immigration, Economic Immigration

Bienvenidos a Fleischmanns – An Immigrant Community in Rural America

Rocktown: From the Small Town to the Big Box

Week 4 – Retirement Immigration and Theological, Biblical and Ecclesiastical Resources for Change

## **EXPLORING CONTEMPORARY RURAL ISSUES THROUGH FILM – Economic Displacement Cr/NCr only**

**Instructor: Ann Fritschel**

**Office: Fritschel 308**

### Course Description

This course explores the changing nature of rural communities as economic changes continue to shape rural communities . Documentaries and readings help focus the discussion around understanding different facets of the issues of the changing economic rural scene. The last week focuses on discussing biblical, theological and ecclesiastical resources for equipping congregations and community leaders to deal with change in healthy and missional ways.

### Goals of the Course

This course is designed to help students:

Gain an understanding of contemporary rural contexts by focusing on one issue.

Explore the issues surrounding rural economic change .

Evaluate the arguments put forward by supporters and opponents of different strategies for dealing with economic change.

Gain a beginning understanding of the process of change in rural communities.

Evaluate ecclesiastical resources for equipping congregations and communities to deal with rural economic change.

Develop biblical and theological resources for addressing change in rural and small town settings.

### Pastoral Practices

The instructor aims to foster especially these pastoral practices in this course

Practice of Curiosity

Practice of Complex Analysis

Practice of Immersion in Context

Practice of Biblical and Theological Wisdom

### Requirements

Attendance and active participation in class. As a module, it is important to attend all classes. Students may make up one class with permission of the instructor.

Reading of all assigned materials and viewing of all films.

Completion of a five page paper on biblical and theological resources for addressing the issue of rural immigration.

### Evaluation

Class Participation 40%

Paper 60%

It is seminary policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disability conditions that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students are responsible for informing their instructor of any documented disabilities by the end of the first

week of class or upon subsequent diagnosis. Documentation on disability conditions is to be kept on file with the Dean of Students office.

**Policy Regarding Use of Internet During Class**

The use of the internet during class sessions is limited to tools directly and immediately applicable to the lecture/discussion of any particular day. Texting, twittering, tweeting, browsing e-mail, playing games, and any other non-class related use of the internet during class sessions is prohibited. The instructor reserves the right to deny class time computer access to students who fail to follow this policy.

Course Assignments

Week 1 – Understanding the Culture/Values of the Rural Context and Introduction to Rural Economic Change

- Understanding Rural America, ERS/USDA Ag Info Bulletin #710
- Policy Options for a Changing America
- Film – Farms without Farmers
- Film –Avoiding the Money Trap

Week 2 – Economic Change

- Film – American Dream
- Film – Prison Town

Week 3 – Economic Change

- Film – Volunteer Town (Oregon Story PBS)
- Film – Obery Farms
- Film – Rethinking the Forests (Oregon Story)

Week 4 – Theological, Biblical and Ecclesiastical Resources for Change  
Churches in Transition: Evangelism and Mission –CTL film

**MN5XXT. Theology of Eating.**

**A Course in Rural Ministry and Constructive Theology**

**Spring Semester, module of classroom hours mid-semester, and the option of independent study.**

**Credit Hours: 1 or 2 credit hours, credit/no credit or letter grade.**

Description of Course:

This course tests the hypothesis that food and eating are underexplored aspects of the spiritual life of congregations, especially congregations in town and country locations. It will investigate the theology of food and eating with an eye toward the related theological ramifications that accompany the appreciation of that great gift of God's. The course will be constructive and will be attentive to the methodological issues in such an adventure.

Objectives:

To encourage participants to work experimentally with theological materials – in this case, food and the food supply system – to articulate theological perspectives and norms for the Christian life.

To provoke students to think of food and food production and preparation as skills and delights that are especially indigenous to rural populations and may thus be a resource that the rural church has to offer the wider body of Christ.

To see plants, animals, and ourselves in an ecological web that is interconnected with the Creator and stands in ongoing relation to the Creator.

To be able to interpret the events of everyday life – food and eating in all their multivariate meanings and roles – from a Christian perspective with the use of Biblical studies, theology, church history, ethics, congregational practices and skills, pastoral care, etc.

Procedure:

Those who are interested in the two credit option would meet early in the semester to establish procedures of independent study and assignment that would be due at the conclusion of the second module of classes. They would be encouraged to write or compose or draw or preach a composition related to the theology of food from the perspective of particular theological disciplines.

The course would ask all students to consider the particular ways in which rural and smaller membership congregations could lift up the ministry of food either through congregational fellowship or theological sensitivity or ministry in daily life or ecological themes or .....

Particular use would be made of the Rural Ministry Conference in which there are preachers, practitioners, theologians, Biblical Studies professors, and congregational teams exploring the theology of food. (March 9-11)

Requirements (one hour): Engaged participation in all classes;

Reading

Seven-page presentation of exploration or some other creative effort and reflection.

(two hours): All of the above and independent study in which the student employs a wider disciplinary lens and also attends and uses the expertise and perspectives that the Rural Ministry Conference brings to campus. (For example, if the student is exploring the topic of preaching from Biblical texts concerning food, and how they intersect with contemporary life, she might attend Barbara Lundblad's lectures and interview her to construct such an assignment.)

**Bibliography:**

John Koenig, **The Feast of the World's Redemption.**

Monika Hellwig, **The Eucharist and the Hunger of the World.**

Sallie McFague, **Life Abundant.**

Michelle LeWica, **Starving for Salvation: Eating Disorders among Girls and Women in America.**

**Adonis in Waiting** (male equivalent of the above)

Other materials and chapters as they emerge from Shannon Jung's ongoing exploration of the above topic.

**Course Outline:**

Food and Eating as Theological Materials.

Biblical Themes as they relate to food and eating: covenant, blessing, creation, eschatological banquet, etc.

Theological Approaches and Discernment: How can material objects have religious meaning?

The Ethics of Hunger, Ours and Theirs – complicity, environment, global and personal disorders.

Ministry Practices and the Promise of a Ministry of Food

# TACT/Rural Home Missionary Association (Evangelical)

Ron Klassen, D. Min.  
Hours

Rural Home Missionary Assoc.  
and Year Morton, IL  
and Time TACT Program

Course No., Title and

Semester  
Class Days

## PASTORAL CARE IN THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CONTEXT SYLLABUS

### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Pastors in isolated settings find themselves facing a large number of pastoral care issues, some unique to the context, with less help than their suburban and urban counterparts have available. This course looks at some of the stresses town and country life places on pastors and their families as well as those in the church, and explores ways pastors can keep themselves spiritually, emotionally, and physically healthy and thereby able to offer pastoral care to others.

### II. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE

The student who successfully completes this course will be able:

#### InSpirit

1. To hold a spiritual concern for the millions who live in town and country places in the United States and worldwide.
2. To live out the example of Christ as expressed in Matthew 9:35-36.

#### InUnderstanding(Cognitive)

1. To differentiate between pastoral care issues that can be handled in the Town and Country church and those that should be referred.
2. To identify the pastoral issues common among Town and Country residents.
3. To identify issues that may impact the pastor's own health and well being.
4. To understand the effects of isolation and intimacy on the pastor's family in the Town and Country context.
5. To realize the risks of working "solo" and the value of a network of support and accountability.

#### InAttitude(Affective)

1. To have a respect for the unique emotional and spiritual challenges of the town and country context.
2. To desire to keep one's self spiritually, emotionally, and physically healthy .

#### InSkills(Behavioral)

1. To lead parishioners to develop strategies that properly address the pressures of Town and Country life.
2. To act as a "first responder" in crisis counseling situations in the Town and Country context.

3. To access long-distance support from more highly trained counselors when referral is not an option.
4. To develop and implement strategies for personal and family well being in the Town and Country context.

### III. COURSE

#### TEXTBOOK

##### S A.

##### Required

Bierly, Steve R. *How to Thrive as a Small Church Pastor: A Guide to Spiritual and Emotional Well-Being*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1998. (187 pgs.)

Killen, James L., Jr. *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005. (103 pgs.)

Keillor, Garrison. *Leaving Home*. New York: Penguin Books, 1997. (258 pgs.)

A collection of current articles on rural issues, posted on the TACT website, is also required reading.

##### B. Suggested

Foltz, Nancy T. *Caring for the Small Church: Insights from Women in Ministry*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1994.

Richardson, Ronald W. *Becoming a Healthier Pastor: Family Systems Theory and the Pastor's Own Family*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005.

##### C. Supplementary Bibliography

A supplementary bibliography may be distributed in class.

### IV. COURSE

#### REQUIREMEN

##### TS A. Reading

##### Assignments

Read all required textbooks and online articles.

##### B. Written Assignments

##### Pre-Course

1. In response to *How to Thrive as a Small-Church Pastor*, choose the three chapters that address the greatest tendencies to “small churchholism” in your personal life and write 1-2 pages on how you would overcome each of these tendencies in a town and country congregation. (3-6 page total).
2. In response to *Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church*, write a 3-5 page “action plan” setting out how you would implement the suggestions Killen makes in your first year in a town and country context.

3. Choose three recurring characters from *Leaving Home*: a teenager, middle-aged married person, and older adult. Write 2-3 pages for each character (6-9 pages total) as if you were their pastor, reflecting on what their pastoral care needs are and how those needs are conditioned by the town and country environment.
4. In response to the online readings, choose three issues you were surprised to find in the town and country context and write a page about each, explaining why the issues were surprising.

Post-Course

1. In a paper of 15-20 pages, research in depth one town and country pastoral care issue you have been introduced to in this class, and propose a means for a town and country congregation to address that issue. Approximately half the paper should be a description and analysis of the issue, and half should describe the means of addressing it, including needed physical, human, and financial resources.

- C. Quizzes and/or Exams  
There are no quizzes or exams in this course.

V. COURSE POLICIES

- A. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading  
10% for the required reading.  
10% for each of the Pre-Course written assignments. (total 40%)  
20% for class participation.  
30% for the Post Course assignment.
- B. Class Participation  
Each student is expected to participate in the class by asking questions, adding anecdotal information to discussion topics, being attentive to the instructor and fellow students, and interacting courteously with informants during cultural immersion and field exercises.
- C. Late Assignments  
Pre-course assignments are due at the beginning of the class week. The Post-course assignment is due the fourth Friday after the class. Late work will be accepted, but 5% of the possible score will be deducted for each day the work is late, up to five days. No work more than five days late will be accepted. Exceptions may be made by the instructor or Dean of the participating seminary for medical or family emergencies.
- D. Absences  
Due to the “intensive week” format of this course, absences are not allowed. In the event of an emergency, the student should contact the instructor to see if an alternative can be worked out.
- E. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

A+	99-100	B+	91-93	C+	83-85	D+	75-77	F	0-69
A	96-98	B	88-90	C	80-82	D	72-74		
A-	94-95	B-	86-87	C-	78-79	D-	70-71		

VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

This course will draw heavily on case studies and actual interviews and presentations by town and country residents who will function as informants for the class. While the case studies will strive to shield the identity of persons involved, and the informants are participating voluntarily and with informed consent, students should be sensitive to need for discretion and respect in asking questions and discussing the issues presented.

The TACT Program and its participating seminaries do not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination the student is responsible for informing the appropriate seminary office and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.

#### VII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00		The Pastor's Self-Care in the Town and Country Context	Pastoral Care issues in the Town and Country Community	Pastoral Care issues in the Town and Country Community	Congregational Pastoral Care Issues in the Town and Country Church
9:00		Personal issues	Agrarian pressures	Family Issues con't.	
10:00					
11:00					
12:00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
1:00	The Pastor's Self-Care in the Town and Country Context  Adjustment and Career issues	The Pastoral Care of the Town and Country Pastor's Family	Pastoral Care issues in the Town and Country Community	Pastoral Care issues in the Town and Country Community	
2:00			Family Issues	Special Cases	
3:00					
4:00					
5:00					
6:00	Cultural Immersion Activity TBA*	Cultural Immersion Activity TBA*	Cultural Immersion Activity TBA*	Cultural Immersion Activity TBA*	
7:00					
8:00					

\* Not every slot will be used, but due to scheduling demands, all should be held available by the student.

# LEADING THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH SYLLABUS

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A look at how town and country residents think and the spiritual and social tools required to lead them. The course examines the standard issues of church leadership as they apply to the town and country church. It also touches on the role of the pastor as community leader.

## II. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE

The student who successfully completes this course will be able:

### In Spirit

1. To understand the leadership of the Town and Country Church as a spiritual task.
2. To live out the example of Christ as a servant leader.

### In Understanding (Cognitive)

1. Know different leadership styles and understand which are most effective in the Town and Country context.
2. Identify the cultural factors which may make leading change more difficult in the Town and Country context.
3. Understand and communicate the difference between form and content in the change process.
4. Identify and use various tools and strategies to implement change in the town and country church.
5. Know the unique components of Town and Country Church administration.
6. Grasp the inter-related roles of church and community leader in the Town and Country Context.

### In Attitude (Affective)

1. To love the people one is called to shepherd, and to see church leadership as a relationship.
2. To value the form and function of Christ's body in Town and Country places.

### In Skills (Behavioral)

1. Assess one's own leadership style and adapt it to the Town and Country church.
2. Plan for needed change and respond to unexpected change in the Town and Country Context.
3. Administer the physical, human, and financial resources of the Town and Country Church.
4. Function as a community leader in the Town and Country context.

## III. COURSE TEXT

### TEXTBOOKS

#### Required

Wells, Barney, Klassen, Ron, and Giese, Martin. *Leading Through Change: Shepherding the Town and Country Church in a New Era*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Publications, 2005. (112 pgs.) Van Yperen, Jim. *The Shepherd Leader*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Publications, 2003. (137 pgs.) Daman, Glenn C. *Shepherding the Small Church*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006. (231 pgs.) McCarty, Doran. *Leading the Small Church*. Nashville; Broadman Press, 1991. (175 pgs.)

#### B. Suggested

Murphy, Emmett C., with Snell, Michael. *The Genius of Sitting Bull*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993.

#### C. Supplementary Bibliography

A supplementary bibliography may be handed out in class.

#### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

##### A. Reading Assignments

###### Pre-Course Assignments

Read all required texts prior to the class week.

##### B. Written Assignments (papers, journals, study exercises, charts, etc.)

1. From your reading of Daman's book, write a three page paper summarizing the idea of a "transformational" ministry in a town and country context. Due the first day of class.
2. From Van Yperen's book, write a response of three or more pages explaining how his experience as both a spiritual and a literal shepherd helps shape your understanding of the task of leadership ministry in the town and country church. Due the first day of class.
3. From *Leading Through Change*, write a paper of four or more pages describing a change that needs made in your ministry context in each of the four areas set out in Chapter 7, and a strategy for making those changes as informed by the rest of the book. Due the first day of class.
4. Write a three page paper describing an effective church leader whose leadership you have experienced, and analyze why that person was an effective leader. Due the first day of class.

##### POST-COURSE

In a paper of 15-20 pages, based on what you have learned in your reading and in class, analyze your own leadership style and giftedness, and consider what components will be strengths and what will be weaknesses in leading a town and country church.

##### C. Quizzes and/or Exams

There are no quizzes or exams for this course.

#### V. COURSE POLICIES

A. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading  
Each Pre-Course writing assignment, 10% (40% total)  
Pre-Course Reading, 20%  
Class Participation, 10%  
Post Course assignment, 30%

##### B. Class Participation

Students are expected to interact in class with the instructor, guest speakers, and class members.

##### C. Late Assignments

Pre-course assignments are due at the beginning of the class week. The Post-course assignment is due the fourth Friday after the class. Late work will be accepted, but 5% of the possible score will be deducted for each day the work is late, up to five days. No work more than five days late will be accepted. Exceptions may be made by the instructor or Dean of the participating seminary for medical or family emergencies.

##### D. Absences

Due to the "intensive week" format of this course, absences are not allowed. In the event of an emergency, the student should contact the instructor to see if an alternative can be worked out.

Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

A+	99-100	B+	91-93	C+	83-85	D+	75-77	F	0-69
A	96-98	B	88-90	C	80-82	D	72-74		
A-	94-95	B-	86-87	C-	78-79	D-	70-71		

## VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Include supplemental information for the course as needed. The professor may wish to provide information that will help students to achieve the course objectives such as a statement of his or her philosophy of teaching, recommendations for successful course planning, time management, policy on web research, and tips on how to do well on course assignments and/or what mistakes to avoid. Keep as brief as possible.

The TACT Program and its participating seminaries do not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination the student is responsible for informing the appropriate seminary office and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.

## VII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00		James Mason	Barney Wells	Ron Klassen	Barney Wells
9:00		Understanding T/C church Leadership	Leading through Change  Motivators and Mindsets	Administrating the T own and Country Church	Community Leadership
10:00					
11:00					
12:00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
1:00	James Mason	James Mason	Barney Wells	Ron Klassen	
2:00	Leadership Styles	continued	Leading through Change  Methods	Administrating the T own and Country Church continued	
3:00					
4:00					
5:00					
6:00	Cultural Immersion	Cultural Immersion	Cultural Immersion	Cultural Immersion	
7:00	Activity TB A*	Activity TBA*	Activity TBA*	Activity TBA*	
8:00	TBA*				

\* Not every slot will be used, but due to scheduling demands, all should be held available by the student.

**Barney Wells, D.Min.**  
**Rural Home**  
**Missionary Assoc.**  
**Morton, IL**  
**TACT Program**

## **FAITH COMMUNICATION IN THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CONTEXT**

### **SYLLABUS**

#### **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*The oral culture and intimacy of the town and country context present a unique set of circumstances for preaching, evangelism, discipleship, and youth and children's ministries. This course explores the ways town and country culture impacts and reshapes the common methods and strategies for communicating the Gospel.*

#### **II. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE**

##### In Spirit

1. To feel a burden to effectively communicate the Word of God in ways that make it most hearable in the Town and Country culture.

##### In Understanding (Cognitive)

1. To define "faith communication" in a broad sense, encompassing both formal and informal settings.
2. To identify the distinctive opportunities and challenges of preaching in town and country contexts.
3. To identify and overcome the challenges that low population density places on youth and children's ministries.
4. To realize the effects of intimacy and isolation in the town and country context on personal evangelism.

##### In Attitude (Affective)

1. To see the town and country community as a viable and important field for evangelism, preaching, and teaching.
2. To appreciate the uniqueness of town and country culture as it affects faith communication.

##### In Skills (Behavioral)

1. To carry on an effective Christian Education program for all ages with limited resources.
2. To employ appropriate evangelistic strategies for the town and country context.
3. To select appropriate resources for Sunday School and youth programs in the town and country setting.
4. To evaluate homiletic methods regarding their suitability for the town and country church.

#### **III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS**

##### **A. Required**

Chromey, Rick. *Children's Ministry Guide for Smaller Churches*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 1995 (139 pgs.)

Grassel, Rich. *Help! I'm a Small Church Youth Worker*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002 (115 pgs.)

Griggs, Donald L. and Walther, Judy McKay. *Christian Education in the Small Church*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1988. (112 pgs.)

Ruffcorn, Kevin. *Rural Evangelism*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1994. (128 pgs.) McMullen, Shawn, ed. *Unleashing the Potential of the Smaller Church*. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 2006. (158 pgs.)

#### **B. Suggested**

Hunter, R. Kent. *The Lord's Harvest and the Rural Church*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1993.

Chromey, Rick. *Youth Ministry in Small Churches*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing Co., 1990.

Zunkel, C. Wayne. *Growing the Small Church*. Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1983.

#### **C. Supplementary Bibliography**

A supplementary bibliography may be handed out in class.

### **IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **A. Reading Assignments**

1. Read all Required Texts prior to the class week.

#### **B. Written Assignments**

##### **PRE-COURSE**

1. In a paper of 3-5 pages, compare Chromey's book on children's ministry and Grassel's book on youth ministry. How is ministry to each age group in the town and country church similar? How is it different? What issues from these books seemed to speak specifically to the town and country context, as opposed to small churches in any context?

2. After reading Griggs' and Walther's book, acquire a sample of Sunday School or Bible Study curriculum from a church, seminary library, or bookstore. Using criteria from the textbook and your own thinking, write a 2-3 page analysis of the suitability of that curriculum for use in a town and country church.

3. Ruffcorn's book looks primarily at the thinking in town and country congregations that inhibits evangelism, and how to change those patterns of thinking. In a paper of 2-3 pages, explain which of those patterns of thinking would challenge you most as a pastor, and why.

4. From the book edited by McMullen, which chapter or chapters seemed to speak most to what you hoped to learn from this course, and why? Answer in a 2-3 page essay.

5. Interview a pastor who has preached regularly in a town and country context for at least three years to find out what that pastor sees as being unique about preaching in this context. Report your findings in a 2-3 page paper. NOTE: this report is to be about preaching *per se*, not about ministry in general.

##### **POST-COURSE**

1. Choose two from the following topics (Preaching, Personal Evangelism, Corporate Evangelism, Christian Education/Discipleship, Youth Ministry, Children's Ministry) and develop a tentative plan for your first (or next, if you are already serving there) year of ministry in a town and country church. You should devote about 10 pages to each of the two topics you choose. Plans should be specific, and should include your rationale, supported by research.

#### **C. Quizzes and/or Exams**

Due to the intensive-week nature of this course, there are no quizzes or exams.

## V. COURSE POLICIES

### A. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading

Each Pre-Course writing assignment, 10% (50% total)

Pre-Course Reading, 10%

Class Participation, 10%

Post Course assignment, 30%

### B. Class Participation

Students are expected to interact in class with the instructor, guest speakers, and class members.

### C. Late Assignments

Pre-course assignments are due at the beginning of the class week. The Post-course assignment is due the fourth Friday after the class. Late work will be accepted, but 5% of the possible score will be deducted for each day the work is late, up to five days. No work more than five days late will be accepted. Exceptions may be made by the instructor or Dean of the participating seminary for medical or family emergencies.

### D. Absences

Due to the “intensive week” format of this course, absences are not allowed. In the event of an emergency, the student should contact the instructor to see if an alternative can be worked out.

### E. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

<b>A+</b>	<b>99-100</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>91-93</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>83-85</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>75-77</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>0-69</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>96-98</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>88-90</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>80-82</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>72-74</b>		
<b>A-</b>	<b>94-95</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>86-87</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>78-79</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>70-71</b>		

## VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

This course is missiological in nature; it deals with the implementation of the Great Commission in a specific culture. It is aimed at helping the student discover and implement not only biblically but also culturally-appropriate and effective approaches for reaching town and country people for Christ and nurturing their spiritual growth.

A considerable portion of the material to be presented in class, especially on preaching, has never been published, or is out of print.

The TACT Program and its participating seminaries do not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination the student is responsible for informing the appropriate seminary office and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.

## VII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

This schedule, formatted to the dates of each class session, should include a list of lecture/course topics to be covered, written assignments with due dates, quizzes and /or exams with dates, and notation of days when regularly scheduled class sessions will not meet. The use of a table in this section is recommended. Labeled columns are suggestions only.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00		Preaching in the Town and Country Context (sermon preparation, delivery, and support)	Community Ministry and Outreach in the Town and Country Context  Personal Evangelism in the Town and Country Culture (obstacles and opportunities, methods, message)	Adult Education, Sunday School, and Small Groups and Children's Ministry in a Town and Country Context (time and distance, resources, transportation)	Developing strategies, evaluating actions.
9:00					
10:00					
11:00					
12:00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
1:00	Town and County Cultural Issues in Faith Communication	Corporate Cross-cultural Evangelism in the Town and Country Context (principles and programs)	Discipleship and Christian Maturity in the Town and Country Church (individual involvement, evaluation)	Youth Ministry in a Town and Country Context (pop. density, scheduling, cultural issues)	
2:00					
3:00					
4:00					
5:00					
6:00	Cultural Immersion	Cultural Immersion	Cultural Immersion	Cultural Immersion	
7:00	Exercise TBA	Exercise TBA	Exercise TBA	Exercise TBA	
8:00					

# MINISTERING IN THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH

## SYLLABUS

(Syllabus is on-line at [www.tactprogram.org](http://www.tactprogram.org))

### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

*An overview of ministry in the town and country culture with an emphasis on understanding the varied types of town and country contexts and how each affects pastoral work and strategy. The town and country culture is experienced as well as studied during the class.*

### II. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE

#### In Spirit

1. To catch a glimpse of God's heart for town and country people and His perspective on the town and country church.
2. To feel a love and concern for the millions who live in town and country places in the United States and worldwide.
3. To see the town and country church as a vital part of the Body of Christ

#### In Understanding (Cognitive)

1. To see the spiritual needs in town and country environments.
2. To define "town and country" in both quantitative and qualitative ways.
3. To identify the main features of the agrarian and cosmopolitan mindsets.
4. To identify the types of town and country economies and their impact on the town and country church and its context.
5. To recognize the contextual factors that give a town and country church growth potential.
6. To grasp the effect of isolation on the web of relationships in which town and country people and churches exist.
7. To build a vocabulary for the town and country context.
8. To realize that ambition and success can be properly realized in the town and country context.

#### In Attitude (Affective)

1. To appreciate the unique strengths of the town and country church and its people.
2. To identify the town and country church as an acceptable and honorable calling.

#### In Skills (Behavioral)

1. To lead a church with both the agrarian and cosmopolitan mindsets to a unifying and fruitful cooperative ministry.
2. To successfully interact theologically and sociologically with members of the town and country culture.
3. To use available printed and electronic resources to better understand the town and country church.
4. To formulate ministry strategies for such things as preaching, teaching, evangelizing, vision casting, counseling, and administrating in ways sensitive to the town and country context.

### III. COURSE

#### TEXTBOOKS A.

##### **Required**

Klassen, Ron and John Koessler. *No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town Church.*

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996 (113 pages).

Flora, Cornelia Butler, Flora, Jan L., and Fey, Susan. *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004 (372 pages)

Urbanska, Wanda, and Levering, Frank. *Moving to a Small Town: A Guidebook for Moving from Urban to Rural America*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996 (327 pages)

Hughes, Kent and Barbara. *Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1988 (204 pages)

#### **B. Suggested and Supplementary Bibliography**

A bibliography can be found at [www.rhma.org](http://www.rhma.org).

### **IV. COURSE**

#### **REQUIREMENTS A.**

##### **Reading Assignments**

1. Read textbooks in the order listed above.
2. Read all textbooks in their entirety except *Moving to a Small Town*. Only pages 263-320 of *Moving to a Small Town* is required reading. (If reading this syllabus on-line, go to [www.rhma.org/documents/TACT/Reading.pdf](http://www.rhma.org/documents/TACT/Reading.pdf) to read these pages.)

##### **B. Written Assignments**

All written assignments should be in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced, with one inch margins all round. In lieu of these specifications, the student may follow the standard policy of his or her seminary.

##### **Pre-Course Assignments**

1a. From your reading of *No Little Places*, provide a one-paragraph *application* summary for each chapter. I.e., your summary of each chapter should be filled with practical applications gleaned from the chapter that fit your particular town/country ministry context (the context in which you presently serve or the context you anticipate serving in someday). The first sentence for each paragraph should begin as follows: "As a small-town pastor (or whatever your role is/will be -- pastor's spouse, denominational leader, etc.), I must . . ."

##### **OR**

1b. In 2-3 pages, describe how *No Little Places* changed, or confirmed, your thinking about the town and country context as a valid and valuable place to minister.

2. From your reading of *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change*, write a 2-3 page paper answering the following questions (approximately one page for each question).

- a. How might the concept of "legacy" affect the decision-making process of a town and country church?
- b. Which one of the six "capitals" in Parts I & II seems most significant for the town and country church?
- c. Of the changes described in Parts III & IV, which one seems likely to impact the town and country church, and why?

3. From your reading of *Moving to a Small Town*, write a 2-3 page paper explaining what, for you personally, would be the two least appealing things and the two most appealing things about small-town life.

4. As you read *Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome*, reflect on how this book applies to the town/country context. Write a minimum of three specific and concrete applications for each of the seven definitions for success given in chapters three through nine (21 applications total). Grading for

this assignment will be heavily determined by how specific and concrete your applications are for the town/country context. The instructor is not looking for generic applications fitting for all ministry contexts.

An example of a specific and concrete application from Chapter 3: Faithfulness means my being careful to put in a full work day, even though my office is at home. No space for an office at church means I have no visible office hours, which means I am not as accountable to my parishioners as I might be in other circumstances. This makes it tempting to chronically get a late start to my day, or allow too many distractions from my children, the television, a magazine, a household chore, etc., which eats away time that I should devote to ministry.

An example of NOT being specific and concrete from Chapter 3: Faithfulness means I will read God’s Word daily. (While it is true that this is a good example of faithfulness, it is not specific for the town/country context. Rather it is a generic application for all people in ministry and all ministry contexts.)

**Post Course Assignment**

1. Describe one changing trend in North American Town and Country culture, and strategize for ministry in a community where this trend is occurring. The paper should be between 13 and 17 pages in length and follow the formatting specifications above. The paper is due on the fourth Friday following the class, and should be submitted by email in Microsoft Word format if possible.

**C. Quizzes and/or Exams**

Due to the intensive-week format of this course, there are no quizzes or exams.

**V. COURSE POLICIES**

**A. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading**

Class Participation 20% *No*  
*Little Places* paper 10% *Rural*  
*Communities* paper 10% *Moving to*  
*a Small Town* paper 10% *Liberating*  
*Ministry* paper 10% Post-Course  
assignment 40%

**B. Class Participation**

See V.A. above.

**C. Late Assignments**

Pre-course assignments are due at the beginning of the class week. The post-course assignment is due the fourth Friday after the class. Late work will be accepted, but 5% of the possible score will be deducted for each day the work is late, up to five days. No work more than five days late will be accepted. Exceptions may be made by the instructor or Dean of the participating seminary for medical or family emergencies.

**D. Absences**

Due to the “intensive week” format of this course, absences are not allowed. In the event of an emergency, the student should contact the instructor to see if an alternative can be worked out.

**E. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale**

A+	99-100	B+	91-93	C+	83-85	D+	75-77	F	0-69
A	96-98	B	88-90	C	80-82	D	72-74		
A-	94-95	B-	86-87	C-	78-79	D-	70-71		

**VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

A key component of this course is cultural immersion. The class will not just study the context of the town and country church, it will live in it. At least three field immersion experiences will be conducted during the class week. These may at times be “hands on” and may involve contact with livestock, soil, agricultural and industrial environments, and outdoor recreational activities. Students should bring a pair of old shoes or boots and at least one pair of jeans that can get “messy.”

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## VII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00		Rural community institutions	A theology of t/c ministry	Basics of t/c church leadership	Christian education, youth and children’s ministry, and discipleship in the t/c context
9:00		Becoming a student of rural culture	Taxonomy of t/c churches		
10:00			Basic tools for t/c ministry		
11:00					
12:00	Lunch provided in the classroom	Windshield reconnaissance field trip	Lunch	Lunch	
1:00	What is rural?		Personal issues in t/c ministry	Preaching, evangelism, missions, worship, vision casting, and pastoral care in the t/c context	
2:00	Agrarian/ Cosmopolitan compared and contrasted				
3:00	Rural cultural anthropology				
4:00			Pastoral issues in t/c ministry		
5:00					
6:00	Cultural immersion exercise	Cultural immersion exercise	Cultural immersion exercise	Cultural immersion exercise	
7:00	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	
8:00					

# SEMINAR IN TOWN AND COUNTRY MINISTRY SYLLABUS

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students in this course will research a topic in Town and Country Ministry and present their findings to the class in a collaborative learning environment. The instructor will suggest topics and offer reading lists, and students may suggest topics of special interest.

## II. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE

### In Spirit

1. To desire lifelong learning, thereby fostering excellence in town and country ministry.

### In Understanding (Cognitive)

1. To grasp the importance of the social, economic, and cultural contexts of town and country ministry in a deeper way.
2. To identify isolated and unique facets of town and country ministry..
3. To identify those areas of town and country ministry that stimulate the student's personal interest and passion..

### In Attitude (Affective)

1. To value varieties of town and country ministry.
2. To appreciate the implications of other disciplines for town and country ministry.

### In Skills (Behavioral)

1. To research a particular town and country ministry need and formulate a tentative strategy to address it.
2. To present a compelling need and a particular strategy for a diverse aspect of town and country ministry.

## III. COURSE TEXT

### TEXTBOOKS Required

There are no specific textbooks for this course, as each student will read on a different topic.

### B. Suggested & Supplementary Bibliography

Each student will distribute to the rest of the class a bibliography related to the topic chosen.

## IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### A. Reading Assignments

#### Assignments

Each student will read a minimum of 1500 pages on his or her selected topic. Readings may come from books and monographs, articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers, Masters and Doctoral level research reports, articles and weblogs on the Internet, and other print or electronic media. Audio resources (recordings of lectures, speeches) as well as recordings of the student's own interviews with experts and practitioners in the student's topic, may also be used. When such audio resources are used, one minute of recording time substitutes for one page of reading.

**B. In-Class Presentation**

Each student will present in class a summary of his or her reading. The time allowed for each presentation may vary depending on the number of students in the class, but should not be less than two hours and not more than three hours.

The presentation should include an informative summary of the contextual issue and its ministry implications, and a strategy to address those ministry needs.

**C. Post Course Assignment**

The student will submit a paper of approximately forty pages in length presenting in written form the in-class presentation. The paper should be done in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, with 1 inch margins. In lieu of this format, the student may follow the standard guidelines of his or her institution. Papers submitted will become part of the TACT Program online holdings.

**D. On-Line Alternative**

If less than five students are enrolled in the class, it will likely be offered on line instead of in the classroom. In this case, the student will be required to post to the course website the written assignment listed in C above before the course week. Students will be expected to read the posted papers of all other students in the course and post online a 3-5 page response. In addition, an online discussion forum will be conducted for each topic. Papers submitted will become part of the TACT Program online holdings.

**E. Quizzes and/or Exams**

Due to the intensive-week format of this course, there are no quizzes or exams.

**V. COURSE POLICIES**

**A. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading**

Class Participation	20%	
Class Presentation	30%	In the event the course is conducted online, the class presentation and post-course assignment combine to
Post-Course assignment	30%	contribute 60% of the student's grade.
Reading	20%	

**B. Class Participation**

See V.A. above.

**C. Late Assignments**

Pre-course assignments are due at the beginning of the class week. The in-class presentation must be presented during the scheduled time slot in class (if the class is offered online, the presentation/post-course assignment must be posted to the website before the class begins. The post-course assignment is due the fourth Friday after the class. Late work will be accepted, but 5% of the possible score will be deducted for each day the work is late, up to five days. No work more than five days late will be accepted. Exceptions may be made by the instructor or Dean of the participating seminary for medical or family emergencies.

**D. Absences**

Due to the "intensive week" format of this course, absences are not allowed. In the event of an emergency, the student should contact the instructor to see if an alternative can be worked out.

**E. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale**

A+	99-100	B+	91-93	C+	83-85	D+	75-77	F	0-69
A	96-98	B	88-90	C	80-82	D	72-74		
A-	94-95	B-	86-87	C-	78-79	D-	70-71		

## VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

The TACT Program and its participating seminaries do not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination the student is responsible for informing the appropriate seminary office and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.

## VII. TOPICS

Community street festivals

Effects of banking mergers on small town capital

The role of Wal-Mart in the rural culture and economy

Hog confinement operations

The effects of the Loan Deficiency Payment program on grain farmers

Hispanic in-migration in the Midwest and upper Great Plains

Asian in-migration in the upper Great Plains and Great Lakes States

The effects of hosting a prison on the economy and social service system of a rural community

Domestic violence in a rural community

Methamphetamine labs in rural America]

Genetically modified organisms and the rural economy

Ministry on the reservation

Rural telecommuters

Rural teenagers and alcohol

The role of the “coffee shop” in the rural community

The importance of high school sports

Rural law enforcement

The effects of the Interstate Highway System on the rural economy

The role of the local newspaper in the small town

Rural community developments grants

The effect of riverboat and reservation casinos on the society of a small town.

The grain marketing system

Militia movements, survivalists, and cults in rural America.

Inductive preaching in the rural church

Vacation Bible School in rural communities

Scheduling programs in low population density areas

The church and rural community development

“Open building” strategies in the small town  
 The Community Service (Thanksgiving, Good Friday, etc)  
 Ministry in bilingual communities  
 Bivocational ministry  
 Ministry to migrant workers  
 The funeral in the rural community  
 Ministry to transients (people who stop in and ask for financial assistance on their way through town)  
 Publicizing the open-county church  
 Musical genres and rural church singing  
 Ministry without a staff  
 Parsonage privacy  
 Children’s or youth ministry in a rural church  
 Resource management in a place with limited resources  
 An apologetic for small-town church planting  
 The pastor’s family in small-town ministry  
 Growth and ministry strategies for a village church  
 Snake handling  
 Southern Gospel music and Gospel Sings in rural culture and churches  
 Appropriate technology for the open country church  
 World missions and rural churches  
 The value of pastoral longevity in the rural church  
 Discipleship and leadership development in rural churches  
 The role of the potluck in the life of the rural church

The student may choose a topic not listed, but it must be cleared with the instructor prior to beginning the reading.

VIII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00		Student Presentation and response			
9:00					
10:00					
11:00					
12:00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
1:00	Student	Student	Student Presentation	Student	

2:00	Presentation and response	Presentation and response	and response	Presentation and response	
3:00					
4:00					
5:00					
6:00					
7:00					
8:00					

## **Luther Seminary (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)**

### **RM 4535: Changing Demographics and Economics of Rural Communities**

Spring, 2007

Instructor: Rev. Alvin Luedke, Ph.D.  
Luther Seminary  
Bockman Hall, Room 113  
(651) 641-3421  
[aluedke@luthersem.edu](mailto:aluedke@luthersem.edu)

Class Meetings: February 9, 6:00-8:00 pm  
February 10, 9:00 am-noon, 1:00-4:00 pm  
  
February 23, 6:00-8:00 pm  
February 24, 9:00 am-noon, 1:00-4:00 pm  
  
March 9, 6:00-8:00 pm  
March 10, 9:00 am-noon, 1:00-4:00 pm  
  
March 30, 6:00-8:00 pm  
March 31, 9:00 am-noon, 1:00-4:00 pm  
  
April 27, 6:00-8:00 pm  
April 28, 9:00 am-noon, 1:00-4:00 pm

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00 p.m., or by appointment

#### Course Description

This course explores the development, structure, and maintenance of rural communities. The role of the church in community and the effects of agriculture on community economy will be explored. Future challenges for leaders of rural congregations will be addressed.

#### Course Requirements and Expectations

It is expected that participants will attend class sessions, participate in class discussion, read all required texts, complete the class papers, and present the papers in class. Any absences should be discussed with Dr. Luedke, prior to the absence if possible.

Students will be evaluated on their attendance, on their participation in class discussion, and on the class papers. Weekly papers are due at the beginning of the class period.

**Final papers** are due **Friday, May 11 for graduating students**, and **Wednesday, May 23 for all other students**.

Grades will be determined according to these guidelines:

Class attendance	20%
Class discussion	20%
Papers and presentations	30%
Final Paper	30%

### Required Texts

Brown, David L, and Louis E. Swanson, eds. 2003. *Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. 1993a. *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice*. Chicago, IL: Department for Studies of the Division for Church in Society.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. 1993b. *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*. Chicago, IL: Department for Studies of the Division for Church in Society.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. 1999. *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All: A Social Statement on Economic Life*. Chicago, IL: Department for Studies of the Division for Church in Society.

Farris, Lawrence W. 2000. *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*. Washington, DC: The Albin Institute.

Jung, L. Shannon, and Mary A. Agria. 1997. *Rural Congregational Studies: A Guide for Good Shepherds*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Jung, Shannon, et al. 1998. *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Murdock, Steve H., et al. 2006. *Demographics: A Guide to Methods and Data Sources for Media, Business, and Government*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Other readings and resources may be added by the instructor during the course.

### Calendar and Assigned Readings

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Readings</u>
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February 9-10 Swanson	Course Overview	Brown and
Chapters 1, 8	What is Rural?	Introduction,
46	Rural Culture and Values	Murdock et al.
Chapters 1-4	Socioeconomic and Demographic Variables and Ministry	Chapters 1-3 Farris, pp. 1-
Agria, pp. 15-34,	Gender	Jung et al.,
	Community	Jung and
		57-71
February 23-24 Swanson	Race/Ethnicity	Brown and
116-118	Age/Fertility/Mortality/Migration	Chapters 2-
Agria, pp. 34-35	4, 6, 10-12	Jung et al., pp.
78	Industry/Occupation	ELCA 1993b Jung and
5, 7		Farris, pp. 49-
March 9-10 Swanson,	Agriculture	Brown and
96-116	Education/Poverty	Chapters 9,
Agria, pp. 35-56	13-14, 20-22,	28-29
	Community Organizations/Services	Jung et al., pp.
		Jung and
		ELCA 1999
March 30-31 Swanson,	Household Composition	Brown and
7, 15-19, 26-27	Government/Community Leadership	Chapters 5,

	Land Use/Environment/Natural Resources Agria, pp. 73-111	Jung and Jung et al., pp. 118-119, Chapters 6-7 ELCA 1993a
April 27-28 Swanson	Final Class Meeting, Summary	Brown and
25, 30	Open Topics for Rural Ministry	Chapters 23- Jung et al., Chapters 8-9 Jung and
Agria, pp. 113-140		Murdock et al. Chapters 6, 8
May 11	Final Paper due for all Graduating Students	
May 23	Final Paper due for all Non-graduating Students	

### **Guidelines for the Class Papers**

Directions for papers will be presented in each class session. These papers will be related to the topic presented in the session, and the chosen congregation and community will be the context on which the report is based. Each report should include some relation to the course readings or lectures/discussions of the topic studied, as well as an overview of the past trends in the community in congregation, of the present condition of the community and congregation, and of ministry implications. Each paper should strive to be brief and concise, not more than 3 pages long for each topic. These papers will be presented in class each session.

### **Guidelines for Final Paper**

Your synod has just elected a new bishop, and there is a request to assist the bishop in learning about the congregations of the synod. The bishop has requested that you make a presentation describing the history and ministry of the congregation you have chosen to study in this class, and the community in which the congregation is located and does its ministry. Then you are to present the ten most important **new** ministry activities

in which you and the congregation are, or should be, engaged (the top ten priorities for **new** ministry activities).

The final paper for this class will be to develop this presentation for the bishop. In 15-20 pages you are to describe the congregation and community. Present relevant history of the congregation and the community, as well as current characteristics of the congregation and community. Then present the top ten **new** ministry priorities for the congregation in its community, defending your selection of these ten priorities based on the description of the congregation and community. Finally discuss how you would help the congregation address these priorities as pastor/called lay leader (activities, teaching, preaching, visiting, group formation, social ministry, etc.). Use the topics of the course, the readings, and the lectures/discussions to guide what you address and how you organize your paper.

The paper should be double spaced with one-inch margins on all sides, size 10-12 print. You may use visuals, maps, tables, etc. in addition to the text. Class readings, and additional readings you have found helpful, should be referenced where appropriate. Make a reference in the text using the author's name, year of publication, and page number if quoting or referencing a fact presented in the text. Provide a reference page naming all work cited in the paper, using the style of the reading list on this syllabus.

## RM 4520: Foundations of Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministry

Fall, 2010

Instructor: Rev. Alvin Luedke, Ph.D.  
Luther Seminary  
Bockman Hall, Room 113  
(651) 641-3421  
[aluedke@luthersem.edu](mailto:aluedke@luthersem.edu)

Class Meetings: Thursdays, 1:30 pm-4:20 pm

Office Hours: Monday, 2:00-4:00 p.m., or by appointment

### Course Description

This course is an introduction to the local, national, and global influences which are shaping small town and rural (STaR) life and ministry today. An emphasis will be placed on the realities of the small town and rural context and ways in which congregational leaders can creatively and faithfully respond in mission.

### Course Requirements and Expectations

It is expected that participants will attend class sessions, participate in class discussion, read all required texts, complete the weekly summaries, and complete the final paper. Any absences should be discussed with Dr. Luedke, prior to the absence if possible.

Students will be evaluated on their attendance, on their participation in class discussion, the weekly summaries, and on the class paper. Weekly summaries are due at the beginning of each class period. Grades will be determined according to these guidelines:

Class attendance	15%
Class discussion	25%
Weekly summaries	30%
Final paper	30%

### Required Texts

Farris, Lawrence W. 2000. *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, Inc.

Jung, Shannon, Peggy Boehm, Deborah Cronin, Gary Farley, C. Dean Freudenberger, Judith Bortner Heffernan, Sandra LaBlanc, Edward L. Queen II, and David C. Ruesink. 1998. *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

- Lischer, Richard. 2001. *Open Secrets: A Memoir of Faith and Discovery*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.
- Poling-Goldenne, David, and L. Shannon Jung. 2001. *Discovering Hope: Building Vitality in Rural Congregations*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.
- Ruffcorn, Kevin E. 1994. *Rural Evangelism: Catching the Vision*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.
- Sample, Tex. 1994. *Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will Rogers, Uncle Remus, and Minnie Pearl*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.
- Steinke, Peter L. 1993. *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, Inc.

Calendar and Assigned Readings

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
September 9	Course overview What is rural?	None
September 16 Pages 9-95	Rural Culture Church and Community (1)	Sample Jung et al.:
September 23 Lecturer: Rev. Dr. Yackel-Juleen	Multi-point Parishes	Guest  Mark
September 30 <i>Farm</i> 1-46 Goldenne and Jung: 96-105	Church and Community (2)	Film- <i>Funny</i> Farris: Pages Poling- Pages
October 7 Pages 124-152 49-57	Call, Pastoral office	Jung et al.: Farris: Pages

3-12		Steinke: Pages
October 14	Administration Special Services	Lischer
October 21 Pages 96-122, 163	Rural community and economy Agriculture, Environment	Jung et al.: 153-
Goldenne and Jung: 7-25		Poling- Pages
October 28 Goldenne and Jung: 26-58	Congregational responses	Film- <i>Delafield</i> Poling- Pages
November 4 Goldenne and Jung: 59-74	Evangelism	Ruffcorn Poling- Pages
November 11 Lecturer: Rev. Jerry	Stewardship	Guest Hoffm an
November 18 59-78 Goldenne and Jung: 75-83	Pastoral Care Visitation	Farris: Pages Poling- Pages
December 2 13-125 84-95	Leading Change	Steinke: Pages Poling- Goldenne and Jung: Pages

December 9 Pages 165-221	Professional relations	Jung et al.:
	Pastoral ethics	Poling-
	Goldenne and Jung:	
	Other issues	Pages
106-113		
December 16	Final papers due, 5:00 pm	

Additional readings and resources may be added by the instructor during the course.

### **Guidelines for the Weekly Summaries**

Using the readings, lecture, and discussion related to the topic for the week, answer the following:

- What did I learn about the topic?
- What are the implications of this learning for ministry?
- What is still unclear to me? What questions about this topic do I still have?
- What about this topic do I want to explore further?

Weekly summaries should be double-spaced and not more than one page in length. You are to be ready to share your thoughts on these questions with the class. Please post your summary for the appropriate week in the Full Class Discussion site on the MyLutherNet website for the class, submit a paper copy of your weekly summary to me at the beginning of each class session, and bring a copy for the class discussion, as necessary.

### **Guidelines for Final Paper**

You are considering, and being considered for, a call to a congregation on the outskirts of an agriculturally-dependent small town in the midwestern United States. In 9-12 pages you are to prepare an interview schedule for your interview with the congregation's call committee. Using the topics, readings, lectures, and discussions, prepare your interview schedule to address the following three aspects:

- What do you consider to be the five most important aspects of pastoral ministry? Support your opinion with references from the class.

-What are your five strongest gifts for pastoral ministry? How do they relate to the most important aspects of ministry you have identified? In which aspects might you need to gain further understanding or training?

-What questions would you ask the congregation in your interview (develop at least five specific questions)? Support your questions with references from the class.

Use your weekly summaries to help you think about the topics we covered in class. Double-space your paper, and provide references by authors' names and page numbers in parentheses within the text where they are referenced (for example, Sample pp. 6-8). Feel free to reference other texts that you may find helpful and relevant to the paper. Please provide a References page at the end of your paper listing all sources you have used in your paper. Use the format found in the 'required texts' portion of this syllabus. Final papers are due Thursday, December 16, at 5:00 pm.

## Exploring Town and Country Ministry: New Challenges for Pastoral Ministry

**ML722C** (Bethel Seminary)

**RM4510** (Luther Seminary)

**CL556** (United Seminary)

Sponsored by the Northland Ministry Partnership of the  
Minnesota Consortium of Theological Schools

Fall, 2009

Instructors: The Rev. Alvin Luedke, Ph.D.  
Luther Seminary  
(651) 641-3421  
[aluedke@luthersem.edu](mailto:aluedke@luthersem.edu)

The Rev. Mark Yackel-Juleen, D.Min.  
Shalom Hill Farm  
(507) 831-2232  
[shf@rconnect.com](mailto:shf@rconnect.com)

### Course Description

The purpose of the course is to introduce students to small town and rural communities and congregations, with the goal of students reflecting on implications for leadership in the Church within small town and rural communities. Emphasis will be placed on economic, population/ethnic/cultural, and environmental transition that is affecting communities and congregations in southwestern Minnesota.

### Course Requirements and Expectations

It is expected that participants will read all assigned texts, attend the orientation session, and attend the three weekend events in their entirety. Any absences should be discussed with Dr. Luedke or Dr. Yackel-Juleen, prior to the absence if possible.

Students will be evaluated on their attentive participation at the weekend events, on their preparation of readings and preliminary reviews of the community, on their participation in discussion, on the term paper submitted to the instructors, and the written response to a classmate's final paper submitted to the classmate and the instructors (classmate pairings are to be determined). Students are to be prepared to discuss the community reviews at the beginning of each weekend experience. Term papers and the response to the assigned classmate's paper are due December 28. Grades will be determined according to these guidelines:

Orientation session	5%
Community reviews (3 at 5% each)	15%

First weekend experience	15%
Second weekend experience	15%
Third weekend experience	15%
Term Paper	25%
Response to Classmate's Paper	10%

Required Texts (on reserve at Luther Seminary library, Gullixson Hall)

- Bloom, Stephen G. 2000. *Postville: A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Inc.
- Farris, Lawrence W. 2000. *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute.
- Jung, Shannon, Peggy Boehm, Deborah Cronin, Gary Farley, C. Dean Freudenberger, Judith Bortner Heffernan, Sandra LaBlanc, Edward L. Queen II, and David C. Ruesink. 1988. *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Klimoski, Victor, and Lance Barker, eds. n.d. *Abundant Harvest*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Consortium of Theological Schools.
- Lischer, Richard. 2001. *Open Secrets: A Spiritual Journey Through a Country Church*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Sample, Tex. 1994. *Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will Rogers, Uncle Remus, and Minnie Pearl*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.

Recommended Texts (on reserve at Luther Seminary library, Gullixson Hall)

- Amato, Joseph A. 1996. *To Call It Home: The New Immigrants of Southwestern Minnesota*. Marshall, MN: Crossings Press.
- Amato, Joseph, and David Pichaske. 2007. *Southwest Minnesota: A Place of Many Places*. Marshall, MN: Crossings Press.
- Amato, Joseph A., and John W. Meyer. 1996 [1993]. *The Decline of Rural Minnesota*. Marshall, MN: Crossings Press.
- Berry, Wendell. 1996 [1977]. *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.
- Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. 2005. *The Churching of America 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Poling-Goldenne, David, and L. Shannon Jung. 2001. *Discovering Hope: Building Vitality in Rural Congregations*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.

Calendar and Assigned Readings

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
September 25, 3:00 p.m.	Bethel Seminary	Orientation	None
October 9-11 14-35, 122, Barker pp.	Shalom Hill Farm	The Land--  Environment &  Agriculture	Jung et al. pp.  54-74, 96-  Klimoski and  17-30, 43-56 <i>(Recommended Reading: Amato and Meyer,</i> <i>Berry)</i>
November 20-22 Lischer,  Klimoski and Barker  89  Pichaske)	Shalom Hill Farm	The People--  Community, Culture,  Ministry	Farris,  Sample,  pp. 33-42, 57-  <i>(Recommended Readings: Poling-Goldene and Jung, Finke and Stark, Amato and</i>
December 11-13	Shalom Hill Farm	The People-- The New Immigrants <i>(Recommended Reading: Amato)</i>	Bloom
December 28 Due		Term Paper and Response to Classmate's Paper	

Directions for the community reviews will be distributed at least a week before their due date.

### **Guidelines for the Term Paper**

Choose **one of the three areas of concentration** (the land/environment/economics, the change in ethnic diversity of the population, or the change in rural community/culture/ministry) in this course on which to write. Then, based on what you observed and what you gathered in discussion and readings, discuss the current state of this issue in rural America, its history, and how you, as a pastor/leader in the Church, would help a congregation address this issue. You should envision yourself as the pastor/leader and make a plan for addressing the issue in a congregational setting. Be sure to address the implications for ministry as a Christian congregation in a rural community.

The paper should be double spaced with one-inch margins on all sides, size 10-12 print. The paper should be 12-15 pages in length. **Your paper should reflect a familiarity with readings and class experiences, and demonstrate how they inform your understanding of the rural context and issues you write about.** Five biblical references, with a brief discussion for each of how they would be used in teaching and leadership, must be presented (see below). Class readings, and additional readings you have found helpful, should be referenced where appropriate. Make a reference in the text using the author's name, year of publication, and page number if quoting or referencing a fact presented in the text. Provide a reference page naming all work cited in the paper, using the style of the reading list on this syllabus.

A response to the term paper of a classmate, to whom you will be assigned, will be submitted to the instructors and the classmate. This paper should be no longer than three pages, and should address strengths, weaknesses, and questions or things needing clarification in the paper. The goal is to help your classmate consider how the paper could be improved and strengthened, particularly in light of what was experienced and learned in this class.

Possible questions to use in developing your paper:

What changes have occurred in the lives of the persons, congregations, and communities we engaged? How have these changes been evaluated (good, challenging, disastrous, etc.)?

Are the people, congregations, or communities we saw actively engaged in addressing transition regarding this topic? How?

What is your evaluation of how the congregations/communities were addressing these issues? What was effective in addressing this issue? What was ineffective?

Given the readings and your knowledge, how uniform is transition in this issue across the nation? What differences may you encounter as a Church leader in different regions of the nation?

As a pastor/leader in the Church, what challenges are you likely to face in being a faithful servant of Jesus Christ in addressing this issue? How do you envision addressing these challenges?

What five biblical texts are most helpful in addressing this issue? How would you use these texts to help teach and lead others in understanding this issue?

Instructors will look for the following to be present in a good paper:

- A clear statement of which area of concentration is selected by the student for the paper. While more than one concentration may be selected, the paper will need to adequately discuss each concentration area.

- Indication that the student has completed the readings, and that the student has incorporated relevant learning from the readings as related to the chosen topic.
- Incorporation of what the student observed during the community and congregational visits related to the topic selected for the paper.
- Theological reflection related to the topic selected for the paper.
- Reflection on and discussion about the implications of what was learned in this course for the student's leadership in the Church.

## RM 4575: Leadership for Hope in Small Town and Rural (STaR) Ministries

Spring, 2010

Instructor: Rev. Alvin Luedke, Ph.D.  
Luther Seminary  
Beckman Hall 113  
(651) 641-3421  
[aluedke@luthersem.edu](mailto:aluedke@luthersem.edu)

Class Meetings: Tuesdays, 2:10-5:00 pm, Northwestern Hall 231

Office Hours: Fridays, 9:00-10:00 a.m., or by appointment

### Course Description

Students use best practices model from the book *Discovering Hope: Building Vitality in Rural Congregations* to explore STaR ministry. Special emphases are placed on the context of STaR communities and congregations, effective congregational and community leadership in the STaR context, and the role of the laity in STaR ministries.

### Course Requirements and Expectations

It is expected that participants will attend class sessions, prepare their portions of the discussion material, participate in class discussion, read all assigned texts, and complete the paper assignment. Any absences should be discussed with Dr. Luedke, prior to the absence if possible.

Students will be evaluated on their attendance, on their teaching leadership of assigned portions of the texts, on their participation in class discussion, and on the assigned paper. The final paper for graduating students is due at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 17. The final paper for non-graduating students is due at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 28. The paper may be submitted electronically as an email attachment or in paper form. Grades will be determined according to these guidelines:

Class attendance	20%
Class discussion, leading and participating	50%
Final paper	30%

### Required Texts

Farris, Lawrence W. 2000. *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute.

Poling-Goldenne, David, and L. Shannon Jung. 2001. *Discovering Hope: Building Vitality in Rural Congregations*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.

Ruffcorn, Kevin E. 1994. *Rural Evangelism: Catching the Vision*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.

Sample, Tex. 1994. *Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will Rogers, Uncle Remus, and Minnie Pearl*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.

Steinke, Peter L. 1993. *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, Inc.

### Recommended Texts

Cladis, George. 1999. *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Jung, Shannon, Peggy Boehm, Deborah Cronin, Gary Farley, C. Dean Freudenberger, Judith Bortner Heffernan, Sandra LaBlanc, Edward L. Queen II, and David C. Ruesink. 1988. *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Rendle, Gilbert R. 1998. *Leading Change in the Congregation: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, Inc.

Waldkoenig, Gilson A.C., and William O. Avery. 1999. *Cooperating Congregations: Portraits of Mission Strategies*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, Inc.

### Calendar and Assigned Readings

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
April 6	Course overview What is rural? Why a course on hope?	None
April 13 Goldenne and Jung,	Worship  Rural Culture	Poling-  pp. 36-45 Sample
	[Recommended: Jung et al.,	pp. 124-152]
April 20 Goldenne and Jung,	Food & Faith Conference	Poling-

123	Prayer	pp. 7-35, 96-
	Rural Transition	
	[Recommended: Jung et al.,	pp. 54-122]
April 27	Making Disciples	Poling-
Goldenne and Jung,	Family Systems	pp. 46-58 Steinke
	[Recommended: Jung et al.,	pp. 153-193]
May 4	Evangelism and Caring Ministries	Poling-
Goldenne and Jung,	Congregational profile for final paper handed out	pp. 59-83 Ruffcorn
	[Recommended: Jung et al.,	pp. 194-221; Waldkoenig and Avery]
May 11	Pastoral Leadership	Poling-
Goldenne and Jung,		pp. 84-95 Farris
	[Recommended: Cladis,	Rendle]
Final Paper due	Graduating students, May 17, 5:00 p.m. Non-graduating students , May 28, 5:00 p.m.	

### **Guidelines for the Final Paper**

For the final paper you will be given a congregational profile. I will give you some additional information about the congregational site. You are to place yourself as one who has interviewed and taken a call to this congregation. Based on the profile, the information I have shared with you, and what we have been reading and discussing in class, identify two areas of hope you see for this congregation and which you, as pastoral leader, will help the congregation address in its ministry. Name one area of hope as the primary area you wish to address, and the other as a secondary area you wish to address (in other words, prioritize your choices). Present a clear ministry plan for how you will

lead the congregation in these two areas over the next five years. From whom and how will you get permission and support for the plan? How, and among whom, will you recruit to get others involved in the ministry plan and its activities? Be specific about how you would preach (including important texts and themes you would use), how you would teach (including resources you might use), how you will train those whom you have recruited, how you will evaluate the progress of your efforts, etc. Include likely costs so that you might budget for the ministry activities, and share plans for how you might raise any extra-budget funds needed. Provide a calendar of events that realistically anticipates how long it will take to accomplish this plan.

The paper should be double spaced with one-inch margins on all sides, size 10-12 print. The paper should be 8-10 pages in length. You will be evaluated on the appropriateness of your ministry plan for the context, and the completeness of the plan. Class readings, and additional readings you have found helpful, should be referenced where appropriate. Make a reference for all quotes and concepts/ideas you use from others, and provide a bibliography naming all work cited in the paper, using the style in *The Shortcut*.

Directions to access *The Shortcut*:

- Go to the MyLutherNet homepage. On the right hand side of the page, in the Resources box, click on Library;
- On this page click on Research Help
- On this page click on *The Shortcut*
- From this page you should be able to view or download *The Shortcut* as well as Thesis Templates. People who can help you if you have questions are listed there as well.

## RM 4545: Rural Church Organization

Fall, 2008

Instructor: Rev. Alvin Luedke, Ph.D.  
Bockman Hall, Room 113  
Luther Seminary  
(651) 641-3421  
[aluedke@luthersem.edu](mailto:aluedke@luthersem.edu)

Class Meetings: Tuesdays, 1:10-4:00 p.m.

Office Hours: Mondays, 2:00-4:00 p.m., or by appointment

### Course Description

This course studies the organizational structure of rural congregations, and explores models of leadership within them. A theology of church administration and the administrative skills necessary for effective leadership in rural congregations will be addressed.

### Course Requirements and Expectations

It is expected that participants will attend class sessions, prepare their portions of the discussion material, participate in class discussion, read all assigned texts, and complete the paper assignment. Any absences should be discussed with Dr. Luedke, prior to the absence if possible.

Students will be evaluated on their attendance, on their teaching leadership of assigned portions of the texts, on their participation in class discussion, and on the assigned paper. The final paper is due at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 23. The paper may be submitted electronically as an email attachment or in paper form. Grades will be determined according to these guidelines:

Class attendance	20%
Class discussion, leading and participating	50%
Final paper	30%

### Required Texts

Bacher, Robert N., and Michael Cooper-White. 2007. *Church Administration: Programs, Process, Purpose*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

*Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. [Latest year]. Augsburg Fortress. (you can download this from the ELCA website)

Oswald, Roy M. 1991. *Clergy Self-Care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, Inc.

Ruffcorn, Kevin E. 1994. *Rural Evangelism: Catching the Vision*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.

Steinke, Peter L. 2006 [1996]. *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, Inc.

Calendar and Assigned Readings

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
November 4 Cooper-White, 291-302	Course overview  Why a course on organization?  What is rural? Uniqueness of rural ministry	Bacher and  pp. 1-40,
November 11 Cooper-White,  Lecturer,  Hoffman	Stewardship	Bacher and  pp. 117-177 Guest  Rev. Jerry
November 18 Constitution  Cooper-White, 241-264	Constitution  Membership Meetings	Model  Steinke Bacher and  pp. 41-91,
November 25	No class-Thanksgiving	
December 2 Lecturer,  Roe	Building and Grounds	Guest  Mr. Philip

December 9 Cooper-White, 179-216	Reports Communication	Bacher and pp. 93-115,
December 16 Cooper-White, 265-290	Evangelism Stewardship of Self	Ruffcorn Bacher and pp. 217-240, Oswald
December 23	Final Paper due, 5:00 pm	

### **Guidelines for the Final Paper**

We have now read about and discussed several aspects of administration and organization in a congregation. For the final paper you are to identify a topic which we have discussed, talk about your view of this topic before you took this class, what you learned, and how you anticipate using this learning in your ministry. Guides for choosing this topic might be something that surprised your way of thinking or was new to you, or something that you had not considered before. Be sure to use class notes and readings in your discussion. The paper should be double spaced with one-inch margins on all sides, size 10-12 print. The paper should be 8-10 pages in length. Class readings, class notes, and additional readings you have found helpful, should be referenced where appropriate. Make a reference in the text using the author's name, year of publication, and page number if quoting or referencing a fact presented in the text. Provide a reference page naming all work cited in the paper, using the style of the reading list on this syllabus.

## RM 4540: Rural Church Leadership

Spring, 2011

Instructor: Rev. Alvin Luedke, Ph.D.  
Luther Seminary  
(651) 641-3421  
[aluedke@luthersem.edu](mailto:aluedke@luthersem.edu)

Class Meetings: Thursdays, 12:30-3:20 pm, Northwestern Hall 231

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 8:30-10:00 a.m., or by appointment

### Course Description

This course studies the theology, theory, and practice of leadership and explores several approaches to social and organizational change. Emphasis is placed on the pastor as a leader of change in the rural congregation.

### Course Requirements and Expectations

It is expected that participants will attend class sessions, participate in class discussion, read all assigned texts, and complete all the assigned papers. Any absences should be discussed with Dr. Luedke, prior to the absence if possible.

Students will be evaluated on their attendance, on their participation in class discussion, and on the assigned papers. Papers 1-4 are due at the beginning of the class session on their respective due dates (see course calendar). Final papers for graduating seniors are due at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 13, and final papers for all other students are due at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 19. Grades will be determined according to these guidelines:

Class attendance	10%
Class discussion	10%
Paper 1	10%
Paper 2	15%
Paper 3	15%
Paper 4	15%
Final Paper	25%

### Required Texts

Callahan, Kennon L. 1983. *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers.

Rendle, Gilbert R. 1998. *Leading Change in the Congregation: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, Inc.

Ruffcorn, Kevin E. 1994. *Rural Evangelism: Catching the Vision*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.

Sample, Tex. 1994. *Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will Rogers, Uncle Remus, and Minnie Pearl*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.

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Calendar and Assigned Readings

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
March 31	Course overview Overview of Theories of Change What is rural? Guest: Dr. Calvin DeWitt	None
April 7	Uniqueness of rural ministry Adoption/diffusion Paper 1 due – Rural Culture	Sample Strommen
April 14	Systems Paper 2 due – Adoption/Diffusion	Steinke
April 28	Key ministry functions Other approaches Paper 3 due – Systems	Ruffcorn Callahan
May 5	Other approaches (continued) Leading Change Paper 4 due – Key ministry functions or Other approaches Setting for final paper handed out	Rendle
May 12	Leading Change (continued) Summary	None
May 13	Final Paper due for Graduating Seniors, 5:00 p.m.	
May 19	Final Paper due, 5:00 p.m.	

**Guidelines for Paper 1**

We have discussed several ways of defining or identifying a rural area, and you are to be completing the reading of Sample's insights into oral culture this week. In this paper discuss your view of rural, and how that view may be challenged or modified in light of the discussions and readings. Which view have you used most in your experience? Which makes the most sense to you? What might be the limitations to identifying rural in this way? How might you use a combination of rural characteristics to better understand a location?

This paper should be double spaced with one-inch margins on all sides, size 10-12 print, and 3-5 pages in length. Class readings, and additional readings you have found helpful, should be referenced where appropriate. Make a reference in the text using the author's name, year of publication, and page number if quoting or referencing a fact presented in the text. Provide a reference page naming all work cited in the paper, using the style of the reading list on this syllabus.

### **Guidelines for Papers 2-4**

Based on the readings and discussions, state the relevant components of each type of change presented in the course that would address ministry issues in a congregation. Be sure to identify the assumptions of the particular approach to change, the various aspects of the approach that are relevant to a congregational setting, and how you would use this approach in a congregational setting. Stated another way, how would you begin to address a congregational context using the particular approach to affect change in the congregation?

Each paper should be double spaced with one-inch margins on all sides, size 10-12 print, and 5-8 pages in length. You will be evaluated on your summary of the various types of change, and on your application of important aspects of the type you have chosen to affect change in the congregation. Class readings, and additional readings you have found helpful, should be referenced where appropriate. Make a reference in the text using the author's name, year of publication, and page number if quoting or referencing a fact presented in the text. Provide a reference page naming all work cited in the paper, using the style of the reading list on this syllabus.

### **Guidelines for the Final Paper**

You will have now written about each approach we studied in class. For the final paper you will be given a congregational setting. You are to identify which type of change you, as a pastor/leader in the Church, would consider the best choice to lead change in the congregation. Present a ministry plan for five years, noting what aspects of ministry you would address first and how you would apply the type of change you chose to the congregation's ministry.

The paper should be double spaced with one-inch margins on all sides, size 10-12 print. The paper should be 10-15 pages in length. You will be evaluated on your summary of the type of change approach you selected, on your defense as to why you selected this approach as the best, and on your application of important aspects of the type of change approach you have chosen to affect change in the congregation. Class readings, and additional readings you have found helpful, should be referenced where appropriate. Make a reference in the text using the author's name, year of publication, and page number if quoting or referencing a fact presented in the text. Provide a reference page naming all work cited in the paper, using the style of the reading list on this syllabus.

# Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity (Roman Catholic)

January Term 2010  
James F. Ennis, Facilitator  
National Catholic Rural Life Conference

## SYLLABUS DVPT 625 Rural Ministry / Practicum (2 Credits)

**Course Description** – Explores the issues, rewards, and challenges encountered in rural parish ministry. The course fosters theological reflection and pastoral response through study and onsite practicum where students dialogue with rural people, Catholic priests, and other ministers serving in rural settings.

This course is a five-day intensive experience. It begins at SPSSOD, with a one-and-a-half-day workshop on Catholic social teaching as it relates to agriculture, rural communities and creation. The presenters and facilitators include Dr. Christopher Thompson, SPSSOD; Mr. James Ennis, National Catholic Rural Life Conference; Mr. Tim Kautza, National Catholic Rural Life Conference; and Dr. Bernard Evans, St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota.

For the remaining three-and-a-half days, students will be located at Shalom Hill Farm near Windom, Minnesota. This immersion experience will include visits to three rural communities, as well as opportunities to interact with ministers, priests and a farmer in rural Minnesota. Please see the attached schedule for details regarding our itinerary.

**Assignment** – Along with full and active participation in this practicum, students are required to write a two-to-three page reflection paper. Comment on the following:

- What pastoral challenges, concerns or problems impressed you the most during the course? Why?
- How would you go about addressing these pastoral concerns (Choose one)? What are the theological/ethical/pastoral principles that inform your response?
- What resources might you draw upon to successfully serve in this area of rural ministry?

This paper is due by noon, Monday, January 18, 2010, approximately one week after the completion of the course. Please turn your paper in to Cherie Coffee's office (Admin. Bldg. 110), and she will deliver the papers to me.

# Spirit of the Prairie

## Catholic Rural Ministry Course

January 2010

### Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity

#### Wednesday, January 6, 2010

9:00 a.m.	Introduction to Rural Ministry Course <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overview of the Course</li><li>• Goals and Outcomes</li></ul>	James Ennis, National Catholic Rural Life Conference
9:30 a.m.	Theological Framework for Rural Ministry Part I	Dr. Christopher Thompson, SPSSOD
10:15 a.m.	Break	
10:25 a.m.	Theological Framework for Rural Ministry Part II	Dr. Christopher Thompson
11:10 a.m.	Break for Mass and Lunch	
1:30 p.m.	A Context for Rural Life Ministry <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>An overview of significant social and cultural issues in rural communities.</i></li></ul>	James Ennis, National Catholic Rural Life Conference
2:30 p.m.	Break	
2:50 p.m.	Rural Laity; Called and Gifted <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>A Lay Minister's Perspective</i></li></ul>	Tim Kautza, National Catholic Rural Life Conference
3:50 p.m.	End of Day 1	

#### Thursday, January 7 2010

9:00 a.m.	Introduction of Dr. Bernard Evans	James Ennis
9:05 a.m.	Catholic Social Teaching and Care of Creation Part I	Dr. Bernard Evans St. John's University
10:05 a.m.	Break	
10:15 a.m.	Catholic Social Teaching and Care of Creation Part II	Dr. Bernard Evans
11:15 a.m.	Break for Mass and Lunch	
2:00 p.m.	Leave for Shalom Hill Farm	Meet in Lobby of Seminary
5:30 p.m.	Arrive at Shalom Hill Farm (SHF)	
6:00 p.m.	Dinner	SHF
7:30 p.m.	Open	

**Friday, January 8, 2010**

7:30 a.m.	Breakfast	SHF
8:20 a.m.	Travel to New Ulm	
9:30 a.m.	Rural Ministry Presentation – Part I	Msgr. Douglas Grams
11:30 a.m.	Mass	
12:10 p.m.	Lunch	New Ulm
1:10 p.m.	Depart for Shalom Hill Farm	
2:30 p.m.	Rural Ministry Presentation – Part II	Rev. Germaine Rademacher
4:00 p.m.	Open	
6:00 p.m.	Dinner at Shalom Hill Farm	SHF
7:30 p.m.	Movie and Discussion– King Corn	SHF

**Saturday, January 9, 2010**

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast	
9:00 a.m.	Rural Ministry Presentation – Part III	Rev. Mark Yackel-Juleen
10:30 a.m.	Depart for Mass at Heron Lake	
11:00 a.m.	Mass at Sacred Heart Church – Heron Lake	
12:30 p.m.	Lunch	SHF
1:30 p.m.	Depart for Sobocinski Family Farm	
2:30 p.m.	Sobocinski Family Farm Visit	Wabasso, MN
4:30 p.m.	Return to SHF	
6:00 p.m.	Dinner at SHF	SHF
7:30 p.m.	Open	SHF

**Sunday, January 10, 2010**

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast	SHF
9:30 a.m.	Depart for Mass in Windom	
10:00 a.m.	Mass at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church	Windom, MN
11:45 a.m.	Lunch at SHF	SHF
1:00 p.m.	Depart for St. Paul	
4:30 p.m.	Arrive at St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity	

## **YOUR EXPERIENCE AT SHALOM HILL FARM\***

### **LEARNING**

The pedagogical approach used at Shalom Hill Farm is largely experiential. Learning happens through theological reflection that integrates the presentations and discussions with your interactions with the people you meet and what you observe in the places we visit. This is not like the classroom environment. It replicates more closely the type of approach you will need to take in engaging a parish in mission and ministry. And like most things, what you get out of the experience is a function of what you invest of yourself.

### **COMMUNITY**

One of the dimensions of your experience is the role you will play in the larger community at and around Shalom Hill Farm. If you want to learn more about Shalom Hill Farm, see their website at [www.shalomhillfarm.org](http://www.shalomhillfarm.org).

Do not underestimate your role as ambassadors in the community around Shalom Hill—ambassadors for Christ, for the Church, and for your seminary. Your presence and your respectful interaction with the people you will meet goes a long way in lifting their sense of worth, as well as enabling them to see real people from the institutions they pray for and support.

Part of your community on the Shalom Hill Farm will be Rae Ann Mathias, the general manager; Melinda Lubben, their cook/custodian; Mark and Margaret Yackel-Juleen, co-directors, and their children Andy, Liz, and Eli who live in the house (507.831.2232). Thrown in the mix are farm animals: Otis, the dog; the cats; and several sheep, goats, and chickens. Watch for them and enjoy them!

### **WHAT TO BRING**

Linens are provided.

In terms of clothing, bring casual clothes for going out on the farm in Wabasso, MN (boots that you don't mind getting muddy, and warm clothes for going outside), and clothes for visiting the Pastoral Center in New Ulm, Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Heron Lake, and St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Windom. We will attend Masses on Friday in New Ulm, Saturday in Heron Lake, and Sunday in Windom, so bring clothes appropriate for the occasion. Bathrooms are semi-private, so you might want to bring a robe and/or pajamas.

There will be some free time, though not a lot. Shalom Hill Farm has board games, etc. But if you want to bring something along for your free time, please do so. Your expenses (food, travel, etc.) while at Shalom Hill Farm are covered. You might want to bring some pocket money along for any personal items. If you enjoy snack food for in between meals, you should plan to bring your own.

### **DEPARTURE**

We will meet in the parking lot in front of the seminary where we will depart at 2:00 PM on Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup>. It is most efficient to carpool. The fewer vehicles we have in the convoy, the easier it is to stay together as we travel down to Shalom Hill and around the countryside in our visits. Jim Ennis' cell phone number is 651.485.5622 if you have any questions regarding travel plans.

Shalom Hill Farm  
42194 County Road 3, Windom, MN 556101  
(507)831-2232

*\*Adapted from Shalom Hill Farm Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel-Juleen*

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## VITA

Kenneth M. Sherin was born on January 10, 1972, in Charlotte, North Carolina to D. Boswell Sherin and Shirley D. Sherin. He, his brother, David M. Sherin, and parents farmed as a family in Indian Trail, North Carolina. Kenneth's public education included: Hemby Bridge Elementary, Sun Valley Middle School, and Sun Valley High School.

In 1990, Kenneth enrolled into North Carolina State University where he earned two degrees: Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources (1994) and Master of Science in Forestry (1997). His master's thesis was, "Developing a Spatial Database for Monitoring Wetland Health in the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge."

In 2002, Kenneth graduated from Campbell University Divinity School with a Master of Divinity degree in Pastoral Ministry and Christian Education. While attending Campbell University, he met Karen Peterson Sherin and they married in 2001.

From 2002 to 2007 Kenneth and Karen co-pastored Hester Baptist Church in Oxford, North Carolina. In 2007, Kenneth and Karen and their son Matthew, born in 2004, moved to Columbia, Missouri for Kenneth to begin doctoral studies in Rural Sociology.

Kenneth and Karen co-pastored Nashville Baptist Church in Ashland, Missouri from 2009 to 2011. Their second son, Caleb was born in 2010.

In 2012, Kenneth completed his Ph.D. in Rural Sociology in the area of Community Studies. In June 2012, Kenneth began employment as a Community

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