Matrices for Understanding Pastoral Leadership and Implications for the Global Landscape of Theological Education

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Measurements of pastoral training would be of immense value to the Global Church. This paper attempts to create matrices that allow trainers to measure pastors' needs for training based on their past leadership experience and context. The proposed matrices identify various stages in a pastoral leader's journey and can be used as a guide when developing training curricula. This paper will also explore the implications of these matrices in relation to global needs for trainers and theological resources. This paper was first presented at GPro Japan, October 16-17, 2018, Mustard Seed Church, Nagoya, Japan.

Introduction

Knowing how to measure pastoral training would be of immense value to the Global Church. Imagine: If we could accurately evaluate pastoral leadership, that would make the task of training pastors much more efficient, as educational institutions and training organizations could design curricula that would be more reliably effective for pastors with different kinds of need.

Knowing what to quantify as primary criteria in measuring pastoral leadership is where the real difficulty resides. As Allen Nauss points out, "[R]esearch on ministerial effectiveness has not produced results of maximum value to the churches" for several reasons (1972, 142). One of those reasons is what he calls "the use of secondary rather than primary criteria" in measuring effectiveness (1972, 142). Primary criteria refer to "observable behavior" or internal factors such as commitment, diligence, and passion. Secondary criteria refer to "observable consequences" or external factors such as salary, life stage, and season in

ministry (1972, 142). Nauss mentions a third set of criteria when he uses the work of Mark May (1934) to identify "spiritual or mystical factors" (1972, 142).

In order to simplify our approach, we will take only two criteria for developing our framework: theological competence and pastoral leadership competence. Although these two factors measure only a narrow aspect of the pastoral leadership journey, they can be effective as a starting point for assessing the needs of a pastoral leader.

Before we consider these matrices, a brief overview of the state of pastoral training in the Global Church is necessary for context.

Overview of the State of Pastoral Training in the Global Church

Various studies have been done to understand the current state of pastoral training in the Global Church. Estimates of the ratio of trained pastors to congregants differ depending on variables and methodology.

During a plenary session at the Lausanne Consultation on Theological Education in June 2014, Thomas Schirrmacher estimated that "50,000 people that do not come from a Christian background and do not have basic Bible knowledge are baptized each day in Evangelical churches worldwide" (Richard, 2016).

On the other hand, David Livermore argued in his book Serving with Eyes Wide Open (2006) that "an average of 178,000 people com[e] to Christ daily around the world. Seven thousand new church leaders are needed daily to care for the growing church" (2006, 41).

In addition, Todd Johnson, research director of the Center of Study for Global Christianity, suggests that "More than 2.2 million pastoral leaders (and as many as 3.4 million by some estimates) presently minister with 'only 5% are trained for pastoral ministry'" (2015).

These estimates paint a grim picture of the state of the Global Church in terms of pastoral training. Although questions have been raised as to the methodology and reliability of these studies, one cannot simply dismiss the fact that few Church leaders have proper training.

In his study, David Livermore estimates that the number of trained pastors globally is only 15%. He claims, "Eight-five percent of the churches of the world are led by people who have no formal training in theology or ministry" (2006, 41).

Furthermore, Livermore believes that the Global Church needs to raise from 2,000 to 7,000 (depending on what methodology we use) new pastors each day just to cope with the demands of the growing Church. Livermore continues, "If every Christian training institute in the world operated at 120 percent capacity, less than 10 percent of the unequipped leaders would be trained" (2006, 41).

This global reality motivated the Global Proclamation Commission for trainers of pastors (GProCommission), a ministry devoted over the next four years to mobilizing pastoral training institutions to increase their capacity in order to address the lack of training among pastors. The GProCommission was officially convened during the GProCongress for pastoral trainers held in Bangkok in June 2016 by various training organizations that conduct nonformal pastoral and theological training. This initiative was created by the president of RREACH (Ramesh Richard Evangelism and Church Health) Ministry.

Measuring Pastoral Training Effectiveness

The GProCommission's work with ministries concerned with pastoral training (such as TOPIC (Trainers of Pastors International Coalition) and the Church Health Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance) requires that we develop a simple way of measuring pastoral leadership and training needs. Such a metric would inform our training strategies.

In 2009, Robert McKenna and Katrina Eckard interviewed 101 senior pastors from different denominations. Their study came up with 23 measures of effectiveness (2009, 303-313). However, such extensive analysis is beyond the reach of most pastoral trainers who work in limited contexts, let alone of pastors themselves. Therefore, a simple tool for assessing pastoral training effectiveness is needed – especially for those with limited access to research and theological education.

As a result, this article's matrices are not as comprehensive as McKenna and Eckard's, but they do help us understand, at a practical level, the national and global landscape of pastoral training needs.

These diagrams were developed to help the GProCommission, TOPIC, and similar organizations analyze and respond to the needs of their constituents. They were created to help trainers understand the journeys pastors make toward becoming effective leaders and eventually trainers of others.
Perhaps these matrices will pave the way for others to develop better tools that will help us understand the intricacies of pastoral training around the world.

Pastoral Leadership Type Matrix

Based on informal discussions and interviews with pastoral leaders, we have found that in many cases, two dimensions affect pastoral leadership and thus are critical to our matrix. These are theological competence and pastoral leadership competence.

The matrix below shows four types of pastors, categorized as Novice, Lay Practitioner, Theoretical, and Seasoned. Pastors with sufficient theological training fall on the matrix's top half, while those with limited training fall on the bottom half. On the other hand, pastors with sufficient leadership skills fall on the right half, while those needing direction fall on the left.
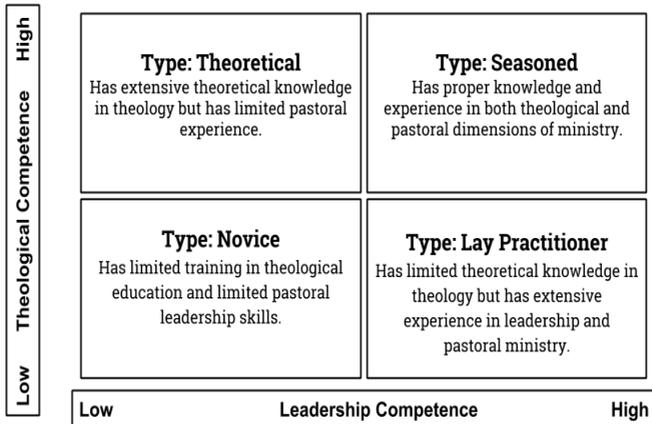

Figure 1: Pastoral Leadership Type Matrix

Some training groups place these categories in a hierarchy so that they can be more easily understood. In addition, these four categories may be renamed depending on context so that they can be more culturally relevant. For example, we could replace the names of each quadrant using terms from the local vernacular. During a presentation in Japan, these terms were translated as follows:

タイプ1：熟練者 (seasoned)

タイプ2：フォーマル (formally educated or theoretical)

タイプ3：信徒実践者 (lay practitioner)

タイプ4：未熟者 (novice)

When using this matrix, a trainer could tailor questionnaires that would assess

where pastors might fall within this matrix given their cultural context and experience. Defining each category of pastoral leader and knowing leadership or theological needs would dramatically enhance the effectiveness of a leadership training program.

Distribution of Pastoral Leadership Types: Three Examples

In the absence of reliable global data, it seems prudent to test these types using statistics from three Majority World countries that mirror situations in other Majority World countries.

First, Overseas Council did a study on Evangelical churches in the Philippines 15 years ago. The study showed that only 5% of local churches are led by pastors with formal theological education. At that time, there were about 50,000 Evangelical churches in the Philippines. Today, according to Bishop Noel Pantoja and Philippine Crusade (PC), there are about 78,000 Evangelical churches in the Philippines (2018). Estimates place the number of trained pastors at less than 30% (though we have no hard statistics to support this estimate).

Most Filipino churches are led by people with secular training who have been mentored through campus ministries and other local initiatives – not seminaries. In our matrix, these would be Lay Practitioners and Novices. Of the 30% that have formal theological training, we assume that they are Seasoned or Theoretical and therefore, perhaps, more effective. However, many churches complain that seminary-trained pastors are too theoretical and therefore not actually effective pastors.

Below is an attempt to visualize the distribution of each type in the Philippines.

Type: Seasoned

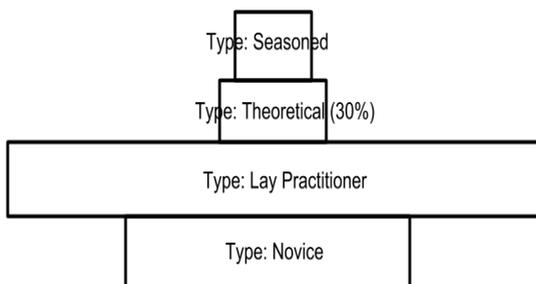Type: Theoretical (30%)

Type: Lay Practitioner

Type: Novice

Figure 2: Probable Distribution of Types of Pastoral Leaders in the Philippines

Second, after a week in a restricted country in Southeast Asia in 2018, we learned that the vast majority of their pastors have no formal education, not even a secular college education. In this particular group, the only person I met who had formal seminary training and a college degree was my interpreter.

Using the matrix, the probable distribution of types of pastoral leaders in this region would look like the visualization below.
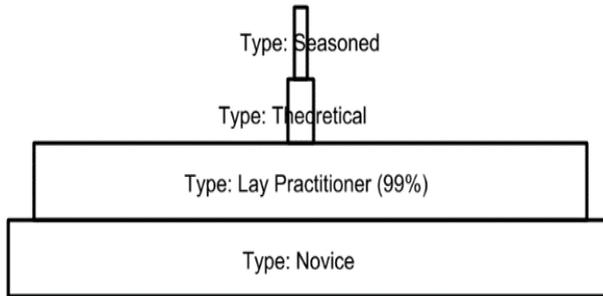

Type: Seasoned

Type: Theoretical

Type: Lay Practitioner (99%)

Type: Novice

Figure 3: Probable Distribution of Types of Pastoral Leaders in Country "C"

Comparing these two diagrams could help global training institutions understand where specific needs are and strategize about how to provide services in these different situations.

Japan presents a third kind of context. Ninety to ninety-five percent of Japanese pastors have formal theological training because this is expected of them. However, as of 2019, the number of students entering Japanese seminaries has declined drastically. As a result, the Japanese church faces a grim future, particularly because most current pastors are in their 60s and 70s. One Japanese leader laments,

> I believe over 90% of Japanese pastor graduated from formal education. However, we are facing a challenge, which most of seminary struggling to get students [sic]. 89% of Japanese pastor is over 50's age, and 47% is over 70's [sic]. It means, the Japanese church would lose 2/3 pastors within 10 yrs. (Personal email, June 10, 2018)s

During the GPro Japan event, we showed Japanese delegates the diagram below, and they unanimously agreed that it accurately represents their current situation.
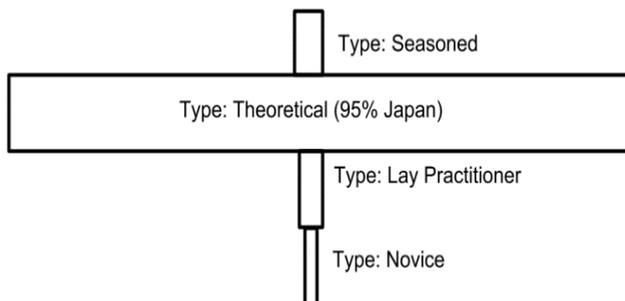
Figure 4: Probable Distribution of Types of Pastoral Leaders in Japan

Implications for Developing Curricula

These diagrams communicate where pastoral training institutions should be focusing their resources. However, the current reality is that most institutions are not aware of these needs and tend to offer the same type of training to every pastor who is willing to attend seminars.

For example, in the Philippines, most theological resources are written for the formally educated or those with seminary training, as the diagram below illustrates.
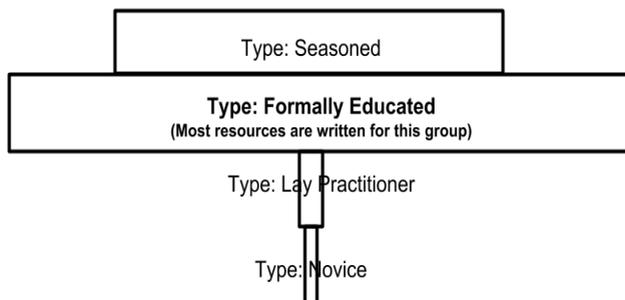

Figure 5: Pastoral Training Resources in the Philippines

When the diagram of training resources is compared to the actual distribution of types of pastors, we can immediately see where the disparity lies.
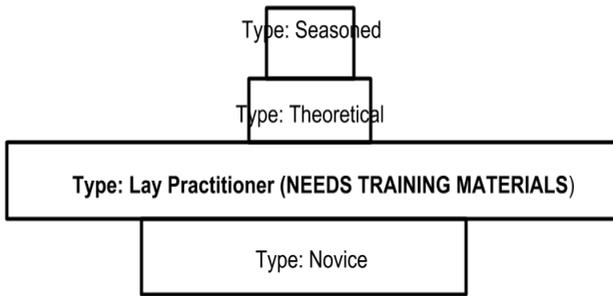
Figure 6: Sector that Needs Training Materials in the Philippines

Furthermore, most training materials available in the Philippines were created by foreign authors. Thus, the distribution looks like this.
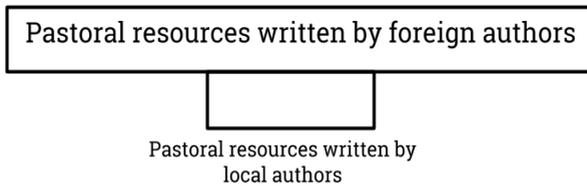

Figure 7: Training Resources Based on Language Distribution

Pastoral Trainer Competence Matrix

For those who train pastors, a different set of criteria is needed. Those who embark on this ministry must have a certain degree of training already before they can train others.

Two criteria seem to separate those who are effective in training pastors and those who are not: network of influence and ability to adapt or create training resources (adeptness). Using a similar matrix, we can classify each trainer as an Aspirant, Innovator, Networked, or Specialist.
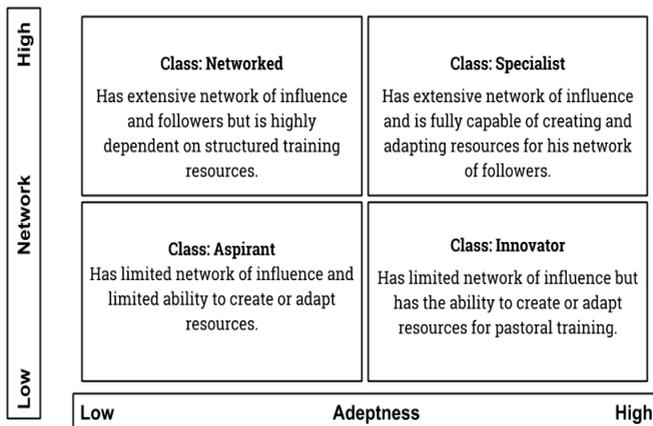
Figure 8: Pastoral Trainer Competence Matrix

Trainers with an extensive network of followers are in the matrix's top half, while those with limited followers are on the bottom half. On the other hand, pastoral trainers with sufficient adeptness fall on the right side of the matrix, while those needing direction fall on the left side.

Since most books and resources are still written in English, we assumed that in countries like the US, Canada, Britain, or Australia, most pastoral trainers will have adequate funding and education. Thus, most trainers would fall under types 1-2.
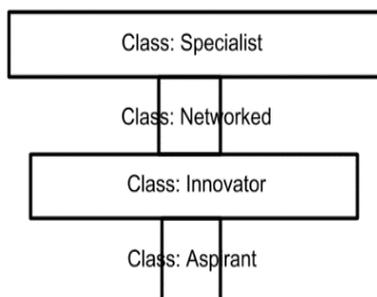

Figure 9: Trainers Distribution Pyramid: Western Contexts

However, regarding pastoral trainers in Majority World countries who have limited financial resources, we assume that most might come from the Networked or Aspirant categories, as shown below.
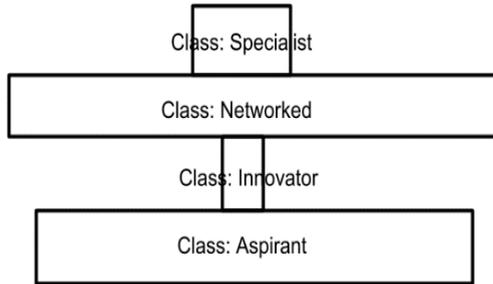
Figure 10: Trainers Distribution Pyramid: Majority World Contexts

For instance, most trainers in the Philippines belong to the Networked category. Few local pastoral trainers have both the ability to create resources and the network of followers to run training programs. Thus, the usual strategy for training pastors is either to invite foreigners to teach or to use materials developed by foreign ministries.

There is nothing wrong with these strategies; however, we need to know how we could equip Aspirants and connect local Innovators so that they could train more local pastors themselves, using culturally effective materials.

Needs Assessment Matrix for Pastoral Trainers

Finally, one matrix that could help trainers assess the difficulty level of their situation is a needs matrix. Not every context is the same. Each training context presents its own level of difficulty based on economic capacity and language or literacy gap.

Figure 11: Needs Assessment Matrix for Pastoral Trainers

For instance, if a Filipino trainer starts a training program in Manila among local pastors using English materials, the difficulty level he faces will be low. However, if the same Filipino trainer decides to run the same program in a rural area where local pastors are at an economic disadvantage, the trainer will need to supply financial resources to help local pastors attend the training. The difficulty level in this case is raised to 2.

Or, if the same Filipino trainer decides to run the same program in Japan, he will face a higher level of difficulty because of the language gap. Although most Japanese churches could afford to address the economic needs of training, most could not benefit from an English-only presentation.

This situation is exacerbated when a Filipino trainer extends his program to Vietnam, where language, literacy, and economic issues all pose barriers to training.

Implications for Formal and
Nonformal Pastoral Training

What then are the implications of these matrices for global discussions about formal and nonformal theological education?

1. Educational Limitations. There is an obvious difficulty in standardizing pastoral training (or theological education) to fit a wide variety of learners. No single curriculum could possibly fit the needs of all pastors. As we have seen, varying educational skills and exposure to training result in many types of pastors. By understanding pastors' needs as they journey toward maturity, we may develop curricula that could guide (rather than impose upon) their development.

Overall, we need to take pastors' learning skills into account when creating resources for their use. As mentioned earlier, most ministry resources have been created for the seminary. While this serves its purpose, we need to encourage the development of easy and transferable resources for pastors with limited learning skills. Depending on region, pastors have varying levels of education. A system that classifies ministry resources by level of difficulty would help pastors chart their own progress – just as elementary schools classify books by reading ability.

2. Technological Limitations. According to agencies that monitor internet access, most of the Majority World has limited internet access. So while digital resources are a welcome development, low-tech applications – books and printed materials – are still in demand in many places.

3. Language Limitations. Another issue we need to address is language limitation. While plenty of materials are available in English and Spanish, very few resources are available in Arabic, Mandarin, and Portuguese. While it may be impossible to have resources available in all languages, the Global Church must strive to have ample resources for all major languages, resources written by authors who not only know the language but who can write from the perspective of their own people.

4. Partnership Limitations. One problem that leaders of Majority World churches face is that they often feel coerced by Western-funded initiatives. They often feel that they have been forced into partnership to serve someone else's agenda.

The most common approach of Western mission agencies or pastoral

training ministries in Majority World churches is to package a program that local leaders are expected to implement. Often, these programs come in the form of training curricula that are given away for free or sold to participants. Funding is provided as long as local leaders stick to the script and meet expectations.

Decision making regarding curriculum, finance, and strategy is often limited to top Western leaders and is trickled down to local leaders for implementation.

While most are happy to be recipients of resources from their more affluent brethren, some cannot help but feel trapped – and, worse, used to promote others' agendas. What needs to be reiterated is that one approach does not fit all. Often, local leaders know what is best for their context.

On the other hand, we have begun to see some Western-funded initiatives employing a broader approach to curriculum design and strategy. Asian Access empowers local leaders to make decisions about adjusting and revising curricula for pastoral leaders as they see fit. They also include local leaders in decisions regarding funding.

Conclusion

Bridging the gap between formal and nonformal initiatives undoubtedly creates suspicion between two very different teaching styles.

Those who teach in nonformal programs are wary of any form of accreditation. They often think that those in formal education are forcing their system on them. On the other hand, bogus theological degrees have flourished unchecked in many Majority World nations because of a lack of accrediting bodies.

All these issues demand that a global body of pastoral trainers be created specifically to champion pastoral training and connect pastoral trainers for mutual encouragement, support and accountability. This global body may be responsible for the following:

1. Advancement of pastoral training on a global scale.
2. Making theological education and ministry resources accessible to those in need.
3. Identifying local needs and connecting them with local content producers.
4. Building healthy ecosystems for pastoral trainers that minimize bogus degree mills.

Several more responsibilities could be added, but action must be taken toward the facilitation of a global body responsible for the health and growth of pastors worldwide. This global body could bridge the gap between formal and nonformal training institutions and find ways to create a seamless approach to theological education. Pastors who begin with nonformal training in church, campus ministry, or training organizations could pursue advanced education in Bible schools and seminaries without having to repeat courses.

This approach has already been adopted in the sciences. An electrician starts with a basic license but adds to his training and ultimately finishes a full college course by simply taking additional seminars. In the same way, pastoral leaders trained in nonformal institutions could choose to take advanced courses and build upon their previous training.

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