

# The Effects of Professional Training: The Social and Religious Capital Acquired in Seminaries

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*Debates over seminary education have been at the heart of some of the most heated denominational battles and schisms, often focusing on doctrines being taught at the seminaries. This research moves beyond the debates over specific teachings and explains how seminaries cultivate distinctive social capital (e.g., resources secured through social networks) and religious capital (e.g., mastery of and attachment to a specific religious culture). Using historical and contemporary examples, we illustrate how seminaries provide clergy with social and religious capital that is distinctive from that of the laity. Finally, using Brunette-Hill's 1994 survey of Milwaukee clergy and the Educational Testing Service's 1996 survey of exiting seminarians, we test two propositions on seminary training and religious capital.*

## INTRODUCTION

Over the course of American religious history virtually every major denomination has been embroiled in battles over the credentialing of clergy. Like any profession, clergy restrict entry by requiring specific qualifications. But the qualifications for entry vary as widely as the religious traditions these clergy serve. Some place high demands on lifestyle (e.g., celibacy), others require specific religious experiences (e.g., speaking in tongues), still others admit only men, and nearly all require some profession of faith. Of all the controversies over professional gatekeeping, however, the controversy that transcends religious boundaries is the formal training of clergy. Debates over seminary education have been at the heart of some of the most heated denominational battles and schisms.

Past debates over seminary education have frequently centered on the teachings. What is a prophetic voice to one, is the voice of an infidel to another. In this essay, we want to move beyond the debates over specific teachings to understand the far-reaching effects of seminary education, including how it shapes clergy's social networks and religious practice. What are the effects of a seminary education? How do these effects vary across seminaries?

To answer these questions, we explore the social and religious capital possessed by American clergy. We argue that seminary training cultivates capital (e.g., social networks, education, and training) distinct from that borne in local congregations. First, we will review some of the major debates on the effects of seminary education. Second, we will develop the theoretical framework and identify areas where seminaries provide distinctive capital. Third, we will test a small portion of the model with two surveys. The first is a 1994 survey of clergy in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin conducted by Sandi Brunette-Hill (Brunette-Hill 1998). Respondents comprise 45 denominations and include those with and without seminary training. The second survey, conducted by the Educational Testing Service, is a national sample of 2,657 students graduating from approximately 50 seminaries in spring 1996.<sup>1</sup> We will argue that seminary training does affect the individual, but that it goes far beyond narrow teachings in theology.

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## DEBATES ON SEMINARY EDUCATION: PAST AND PRESENT

The clergy of colonial establishments were members of a professional elite. Despite problems with clergy fraud and incompetence, especially for the Anglicans, the establishment clergy held high levels of education and enjoyed the benefits of political privilege. By the end of the colonial era, however, the religious establishments were being challenged from all sides and the privileges (and the effectiveness) of their clergy were being called into question. At the same time, the Methodists, Baptists, and other upstart sects were producing an abundance of highly energetic clergy with little or no formal religious training (Hatch 1989; Finke and Stark 1992).<sup>2</sup> The declining presence of religious establishments and the surging growth of upstart sects set the stage for new debates over clergy standards (Hatch 1989; Finke and Stark 1992).

Perhaps the central debate of the 19th century was over whether seminary education was either necessary or desirable. For clergy from the colonial mainline, the thought of abandoning such training was absurd. At the opening of Andover Seminary, Timothy Dwight squared off against those who would make such arguments. He eloquently explained that “[w]hile they insist, equally with others, that their property shall be managed by skillful agents, their judicial causes directed by learned advocates, and their children, when sick, attended by able physicians; they were satisfied to place their Religion, their souls, and their salvation, under the guidance of quackery” (as quoted in Hatch 1989:19). Lyman Beecher, another leader of the old colonial mainline, echoed Dwight’s concerns regarding the “ignorant” and “unlettered” clergy of the sects and further warned that the overly emotional revivalism they promoted threatened to throw the new nation “back in civilization, science, and religion, at least a whole century” (Beecher and Nettleton 1828:99). The colonial mainline leaders found the new sectarian clergy guilty of both dangerous deception and unapologetic ignorance.

The sectarian clergy were not repentant. The Baptists held that “God never called an unprepared man to preach,”<sup>3</sup> and the Methodist *Discipline* of 1784 advised preachers never to let study interfere with soul-saving: “If you can do but one, let your studies alone.” Not only did they hold that God called unlettered people to the ministry, they believed that such clergy were superior to those with seminary training. Nathan Hatch (1989:35) explains: “[i]nstead of revering tradition, learning, solemnity, and decorum, as did Timothy Dwight and Lyman Beecher, . . . [t]hey explicitly taught that divine insight was reserved for the poor and humble rather than the proud and learned.” Sect leaders proudly pointed to the rapid growth of their movements and professed that such growth would never be possible without a generous supply of untrained clergy. The Methodists attributed their meteoric rise to the uneducated and low-paid itinerant preachers, and the Baptists relied on bivocational preachers receiving little or no pay.

The upstart sects not only admired their untrained clergy; they also feared the clergy produced by the seminaries. The Baptists prided themselves on local autonomy, fearing any change suggesting centralized control or a professional priesthood. The Methodists were hierarchical in organizational design, but the first American bishop, Francis Asbury, feared that a seminary-trained clergy would lose touch with the people. He explained: “[w]e must suffer *with* if we labor *for* the poor” (as quoted in Coleman 1954:214–15). As expressed by the Methodist itinerant, Peter Cartwright (1856:81), they were also concerned that seminary education would remove the most gifted clergy from the effective itinerant ministry: “Multiply colleges, universities, seminaries and academies; multiply our agencies, and editorships, and fill them all with our best and most efficient preachers and you localize the ministry and secularize them, too; then farewell to itinerancy.” In short, both groups feared the trappings of making the ministry a profession.

Over time, however, the Methodists’ and Baptists’ opposition to seminary education would erode. For the Methodists the change came quickly. Despite strong opposition, the first Methodist seminary opened in 1847. Thirty-three years later, in 1880, 11 theological schools, 44 colleges and universities, and 130 women’s seminaries and schools were under official control of the Methodist Episcopal Church (Sweet 1933:333; Clark 1952). The Northern Baptists also made a relatively

quick change to stressing more seminary education, but the Southern Baptists continued to resist seminary training until recently. It took nearly a century for the Southern Baptist Convention's seminaries to furnish their first 10,000 graduates (9,946 from 1859–1950), but the next 10,000 arrived in less than a decade (11,627 from 1951–1960). From 1951–1990, enough time to furnish one generation of church professionals, the seminaries produced more than 60,000 graduates (Finke 1994). Pastors without seminary training still remain, but they now represent a declining minority.

Despite the Methodist and Baptist switch to seminary education, and similar changes by other sects from the 19th century (e.g., Disciples of Christ), the debate over the use of seminary-trained clergy is still far from over. Two of the most rapidly growing religious movements in the 20th century, the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses, do not rely on seminary training. In addition, untrained sectarian leaders (as symbolized by the storefront preacher) still remain and two of the high-profile, rapidly growing new movements formed in the latter half of the 20th century, the Vineyard Christian Fellowship and Calvary Chapel, approach seminary education with caution. Though not prohibiting seminary training, they tend to emphasize classes combined with hands-on training from a pastor at the local church—a program that roughly resembles the apprentice program of early 19th-century Methodist itinerants. Sounding remarkably similar to the Baptist axiom of the 19th century, the founder of Calvary Chapel, Chuck Smith, states that “God does not call the qualified, but instead qualifies the called” (Miller 1997:141).<sup>4</sup>

Once religious groups turn to the seminary for a supply of clergy, however, the debates over seminary education are far from over. For many, this is when the debates begin to heat up. Although all professions struggle to reduce the gap between what the “community of education” provides and what the “community of service” wants, closing this gap poses special problems for seminaries. Not only are they expected to provide an education with intellectual integrity and practical applications, they are also expected to guard the faith.<sup>5</sup>

Conrad Cherry's (1995) historical study of divinity schools, *Hurrying Toward Zion*, documents this ongoing struggle between intellect and piety. It is the struggle between guarding the free inquiry and scientific objectivity revered by scholars and protecting the beliefs and religious traditions valued by the local churches. H. Richard Niebuhr's (1956) *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* exemplifies this struggle. Despite striving to challenge existing religion without destroying religious practice, Niebuhr (1956:110, 130) described the theological school as the “*intellectual center of the Church's life*” [italics in original], and acknowledged that during intellectual inquiries, the “subjects of love, faith and hope must be set somewhat at the fringe of awareness.” Cherry's account of divinity schools documents that Niebuhr was not alone in stressing the intellectual activities of theological schools. Intellectualism frequently took precedence over developing the skills desired or the piety admired by those in the pew.<sup>6</sup>

When seminaries and the churches for which they are training clergy disagree on the content and purpose of seminary education, the stage is set for conflict. The conflicts of the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1980s or the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in the 1970s illustrate how bitter these battles can become (Ammerman 1990). In each case, both sides of the debate agreed that a seminary education was desirable, but they sharply disagreed on the content and purpose of the education. Like the seminary conflicts of the 18th and 19th centuries, the recent conflicts frequently centered around specific teachings, such as the authority and accuracy of the Bible, but both sides knew that the differences ran far deeper than the easily documented differences of doctrine. They each recognized that the effects of a seminary's education include more than an introduction to specific teachings.

#### ACQUIRING NEW CAPITAL

Seminary training, like other forms of education, entails a cumulative building process. Clergy accumulate an assortment of knowledge, skills, experiences, and relationships through

their seminary training. Here we will emphasize the accumulation of two forms of capital: social capital and religious capital.

Social capital refers to the resources social actors secure through their interpersonal attachments (Portes 1998; Astone, Nathanson, Schoen, and Kim 1999; Stark and Finke 2000).<sup>7</sup> Relying on a trust that obligations will be paid, information will be provided, support will be given, and norms will be followed, social capital accumulates most rapidly in groups that restrict entry and enforce membership standards (Portes 1998; Coleman 1990). Yet, the social closure that enhances social capital and conformity to one group will reduce interaction and conformity to another.

Religious capital consists of the degree of *mastery of* and *attachment to* a particular religious culture (Stark and Finke 2000). The mastery of the religious culture refers to learning the knowledge, skills, and rituals of a specific religion, e.g., Bible stories, making the sign of the cross, when to say Amen, following liturgies, and so on (Iannaccone 1990).<sup>8</sup> Yet, religious capital includes more than a learned mastery of a religion, it also includes an emotional attachment to a particular religious culture. Religious activities such as prayer, rituals, miracles, and mystical experiences build up over a lifetime, not only increasing confidence in the truth of a religion, but strengthening emotional ties to a specific bundle of religious culture (Stark and Finke 2000).

Using the concepts of social and religious capital, and the large body of theory and research tied to these concepts, we will try to answer the two questions posed in the Introduction. What are the effects of a seminary education? How do these effects vary across seminaries? We begin by reviewing how clergy acquire each form of capital.

### Acquiring Seminary Social Capital

The social capital of professional clergy bears similarities to other professions. Professional clergy look to ministerial colleagues as a source of assistance, reference, and friendship (Quinley 1974; Wilson 1978; Miller 1997). Social capital developed in the seminary and through professional affiliations removes clergy from an exclusive relationship with the congregation to a larger, external social network. Clergy without seminary training, on the other hand, often possess less in common with other pastors than they do with their own parishioners. Their primary source of social capital remains within the local congregation. Members of the 19th-century sects were well aware of this change in social capital, though they never stated it as such. One of the chief complaints of seminary-trained clergy in the 19th century was that they were social outsiders. The Baptist or Methodist preacher was a neighbor, friend, or relative of many of the people he served; the Presbyterian preacher was often new to the area and the culture.<sup>9</sup> Or, to take a more contemporary example, consider a Mormon bishop who is selected from a local pool of qualified members for a three- to six-year term. Once his term ends, he will remain in the same ward and serve, as any other member, under a new bishop. A seminary-trained Protestant pastor might also serve in a local congregation for a three- to six-year term, but after the appointment has ended, she or he moves to a new congregation. For the lay ministers, their enduring social capital comes from the local congregation and not from professional networks or related social structures.

These differences—in how clergy create and maintain social capital—hold important implications for the clergy and the congregation. For example, seminary education can contribute to social closure for the profession. To the extent that seminary training closes off the profession to others—through admission policies, curriculum, and placement services—the training will assist the profession in developing distinctive norms and social networks. For the clergy, this closure is often seen as desirable because it contributes to a stronger profession and to organizational stability. Yet, this closure also increases the social distance between the pastor and the congregation. Miller (1997:166) reports that this is the “chief objection” that the leaders of Calvary Chapel and the Vineyard Christian Fellowship hold against seminary education: “fellow seminarians become the person’s peer group, rather than the congregation, and this creates a distance that is difficult to bridge.”

Without seminary training, the boundaries between clergy and laity are more fluid, and the clergy are more likely to rely on social capital from the local congregation. Rather than leading to a social closure of the profession, this will lead to a closure of the local congregation, especially for congregations emphasizing local autonomy. These tightly embedded local networks will assist congregations in adapting to their unique environment and in generating groups rich in social capital, but increased social closure will reduce the clergy's willingness to take a prophetic stance. Heavily invested in local social capital, they are less willing to challenge the norms of the local congregation.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast, seminary-trained clergy are more heavily invested in professional networks. Two revealing findings from Nancy Ammerman's (1990) study of *Baptist Battles* were how training in Southern Baptist seminaries generated social networks for career mobility and increased support for denominational activities. Describing seminary training as the "union card" needed to demonstrate credentials, Ammerman concluded that "the denominational educational system worked well in introducing people to programs and networks that frame their church lives" (1990:158). When compared to the pastors who attended seminaries outside the Southern Baptist Convention (often conservative, independent seminaries) or attended no seminaries, the pastors of the Southern Baptist seminaries had made a heavy social capital investment in the denomination.

Finally, once acquired, this social capital is not easily transferred.<sup>11</sup> If a Southern Baptist pastor who was trained in a Southern Baptist seminary transfers to a different denomination, the pastor foregoes previous investments in social capital. The trusted social networks that were used for attaining information, receiving appointments, and providing support are lost. Even seminaries that are not affiliated with a single denomination will serve a limited social network. When comparing an evangelical and mainline seminary, Carroll et al. (1997:204) stressed that both were attempting to shape their students, yet they were operating in "separate intellectual, religious, and social worlds." Thus, to the extent that seminaries help to build social capital, this social capital is usually confined to a single social network. For many seminaries, it is confined to a single denomination.

### **Acquiring Seminary Religious Capital**

As stated earlier, religious capital consists of the degree of mastery of and attachment to a particular religious culture. The *mastery* of the culture can be achieved through instruction in religious doctrine, religious history, and the performance of rituals. Once achieved, the mastery can be measured in the form of exams and actual performance. The *attachment to* and confidence in a particular religion, however, relies more on religious experiences (e.g., prayer, rituals, miracles, and mystical experiences) that are harder to capture in the classroom and are less amenable to measurement. Evidence of this form of religious capital is frequently judged by a person's willingness to sacrifice for the faith, live by a moral code, and participate in the outward signs of religious piety and practice. Although clergy are expected to be rich in religious capital, the accumulation of this capital will vary by the religious tradition of the pastor and the training received.

For clergy without seminary training, religious capital builds primarily within the local congregation and through self-directed efforts. A local training program or a few classes from a Bible college governs the growth of religious knowledge and practical experience in the parish hones pastoral skills. Clergy reflect and magnify the religious capital shared by parishioners, including a knowledge of and expertise in the teachings and rituals of the given religious culture. The selection of these clergy (often part-time clergy) places a premium on their commitment to the religious culture and, often, on specific religious experiences. Indeed, because the demands of serving as a lay-minister are often so high, few with tepid commitments would even desire the position. James T. Duke (1997) estimates that the average Mormon bishop (a nonpaid position) donates 20–40 hours per week to fulfill his duties. Even when clergy without seminary training

are given full-time employment as clergy (e.g., Methodist circuit riders of the 19th century or Vineyard pastors in the 20th), they still demonstrate their high levels of religious capital through sacrifice, piety, and devotion, rather than educational credentials.

Seminary training represents a structured educational program governing the standardized accumulation of religious capital.<sup>12</sup> We have argued that seminary effects go beyond religious teachings, but we are not attempting to dismiss the powerful effects of these teachings. Research has consistently shown that the theological orientation of the seminary helps to shape the seminary's curriculum and culture, and has a lasting impact on students (Blanchard 1981; Carroll 1971; Carroll and Marler 1995; Carroll, Wheeler, Aleshire, and Marler 1997). In his pioneering work on seminaries, Jackson W. Carroll (1971) found that seminaries promoting a "Mastery of the Christian Tradition" and "Spiritual Formation" produced graduates with a conservative theological orientation, while those promoting a "Mastery of the Christian Tradition" and "Secular Awareness" held the most liberal theological orientations. Building on Carroll's work, using a sample of United Methodist clergy, Dallas A. Blanchard (1981) replicated Carroll's results on theological orientation and found that pastors graduating from seminaries promoting "Christian Tradition" and "Spiritual Formation" gave greater preference for local church and pastoral roles. In contrast, those graduating from seminaries promoting "Christian Tradition" and "Secular Awareness" gave more attention to social activism. Finally, Carl S. Dudley and David A. Roozen's recent report on 14,301 congregations offers similar findings. They note that seminary training increases clergy use of literature and news events in their sermons, and increases their involvement in ecumenical worship and social ministries, but they conclude that "[c]hurches served by seminary graduates are less likely to maintain traditional religious-moral values" (Dudley and Roozen 2001:66).

The systematic training received in theology, doctrine, history, and rituals provides seminary-educated clergy with a religious capital that is distinct from that possessed by the laity or by clergy with no comparable education. This distinctive religious capital becomes a justification for professional credentialing and expertise, allowing clergy to acquire a mastery of the religious culture that the laity do not hold. But it is also a potential source of conflict and separation between the clergy and the flock. Once again, the recent conflicts in the Southern Baptist Convention are instructive. Historian Bill J. Leonard (1990:124–25), an opponent of the fundamentalists, writes of the difficulty of Southern Baptist seminaries' efforts to "promote academic inquiry while affirming spiritual formation and preparation for the ministry." He reported that "professors often warned their classes not to tell their parishioners 'everything you learned in seminary'" Supportive of Leonard's comments, one study found that Southern Baptist congregations are firing seminary graduates at a higher rate than those without seminary degrees.<sup>13</sup> Thus, to the extent that the religious beliefs of the clergy differ from the beliefs of the people, the potential for conflict increases.

Although seminary curriculums are dominated by courses that pass on knowledge (or mastery) about a religious culture, seminaries also address the seminarian's emotional attachment to a specific religious culture. This component of training, often referred to as spiritual formation, attempts to increase the seminarian's commitment to a specific religious faith and culture, often giving attention to the experiential side of religion (Carroll 1971). Most seminaries give some attention to spiritual formation, but fostering this form of religious capital is difficult when the seminary is composed of students and faculty from very diverse religious backgrounds. Conrad Cherry (1995:38) notes that at the major divinity schools of the 1970s and 1980s, "the student bodies . . . became so diverse that there was no apparent shared religious experience that could issue in common religious devotion." Nor is this confined to recent decades. William Adams Brown (1934:155) conveyed that in the 1930s theological schools made "little provision for the systematic oversight and discipline of the individual religious life." For most seminaries of mainline denominations, intellectual formation takes clear precedence over piety and spiritual formation.<sup>14</sup>

## Implications of Seminary Capital

The implications of seminaries providing clergy with social and religious capital that is distinctive from that of the laity are many. We have argued that this distinctive capital serves to provide the clergy with clear professional boundaries from the laity. The structured training program for developing religious capital provides standardized credentials for restricting entry into the profession and the interpersonal contacts developed at the seminary transcend the local congregation, serving to tie the pastor to a larger social network and providing a new source of social capital.

This new source of social capital will result in clergy holding weaker social ties to those in the congregation and stronger ties to clergy outside the congregation, including strengthened ties to the larger denominational bureaucracy. Because the pastor now relies more on the seminary and professional networks for the development of social and religious capital, seminary training tends to increase the social closure of the profession while reducing the social closure of the local congregation. In contrast, pastors receiving no seminary training will remain more socially embedded in the local congregation and will hold fewer ties with other clergy. To summarize, *as clergy's social capital shifts from the networks of the local congregation to professional networks, clergy will be more restrained by the norms of the profession and less restrained by the distinctive norms of the local congregation.*

We have also discussed the implications of seminaries providing distinctive religious capital. As reviewed earlier, religious capital includes a mastery of and attachment to a particular religious culture. The *mastery of the culture*, learning the teachings of the religious culture and developing the ability to perform religious rituals, is the component that receives extensive attention from seminaries. In past debates, both sides have agreed that seminaries effectively pass on religious teachings. But they disagree on whether seminaries pass on the correct teachings. The source of the debate is whether seminarians are mastering the same religious culture (e.g., religious knowledge, teachings, and rituals) as that of the people. Our arguments on religious capital, and the existing research, would suggest that *the greater the discrepancy between the religious teachings of the seminary and those of the congregations being served, the greater the potential for conflict.*

The second part of religious capital, an *attachment to the culture*, is the emotional component. This form of religious capital is often closely related to the experiential side of religion, religious experiences that serve to strengthen the emotional bonds and confidence one holds to a specific religious culture. Although this type of religious capital is highly prized by the local congregation, it is not easily taught or tested in the classroom (Fletcher 1975). Nearly all seminaries offer spiritual formation as a stated goal, yet few research attempts have been made to measure the outcomes. What are the effects of a seminary education on the clergy's emotional attachment to their religious culture? Below we offer two propositions addressing this question.

The first proposition contrasts clergy with seminary training to those with none. As reviewed earlier, because untrained lay clergy are frequently selected from the local congregation, their piety and willingness to sacrifice for the faith are well known. The selection places a premium on this commitment, giving less attention to the formal training received. When the clergy enter a profession, however, with clear requirements for entry, the placement of the clergy relies more on professional criteria, including educational standards, than their emotional commitment to the religious culture. The first proposition we will test is:

**Proposition 1:** *Clergy without a seminary education will display higher levels of personal piety and commitment to their religious culture.*

But most seminaries do not ignore the development of emotional attachment to a religious culture. Despite giving far more attention to passing on knowledge of the religious culture, seminaries also attempt to strengthen the clergy's attachment to the religious culture through courses

and experiences focusing on spiritual formation. Yet seminaries vary widely in the attention they give to spiritual formation. We argue that the religious capital amassed through a seminary's spiritual formation training will engender continued practices of personal faith development. This leads to the second proposition we will test.

*Proposition 2: To the extent that seminaries give more attention to spiritual formation, seminary-trained clergy will display higher levels of personal piety and commitment to their religious culture.*

To test these two propositions on religious capital we use two surveys. One is a survey of all clergy in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin and the other is a national survey of seminarians at graduation.

## DATA AND METHODS

### Surveys

In 1994, Sandi Brunette-Hill conducted a survey of all clergy in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin (Brunette-Hill 1998; see also Brunette-Hill and Finke 1999). Overall, 45 of the 66 denominations in Milwaukee County participated. Reflecting the diversity of American religious organizations today, the Milwaukee sample incorporates paid and unpaid, full-time and part-time, seminary-trained and nonseminary-trained clergy. Most Milwaukee clergy were paid (93 percent), full-time (85 percent), and formally trained (79.4 percent). This differed by denomination, however, with more than 90 percent of Catholic and conservative mainline clergy possessing structured religious training, but only 75 percent of traditional mainline and barely half of sectarian clergy (51.4 percent) with such training. The response rate was 50 percent and higher for the largest denominations, such as the Lutherans (59 percent), Catholics (50 percent), United Methodists (56 percent), and Assemblies of God (65 percent), but a majority of the smallest sectarian churches did not respond, resulting in a total response rate of 36.3 percent. Also absent from the sample are the Latter Day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christian Scientists, as these groups do not define their leaders as clergy and, hence, did not meet the operational definition for the original sampling frame (Brunette-Hill 1998). Despite these limitations, however, the Milwaukee sample provides a greater array of Protestant denominations than previously considered in the examination of seminary effects on clergy (Carroll 1971; Thompson 1974; Blanchard 1981; Carroll et al. 1997).

The second data source is an exit survey of 2,734 seminarians collected in spring 1996 by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). This study focuses exclusively on the 2,657 individuals who graduated from seminary. Although limited to only those receiving seminary training and offering weaker and less direct measures of our key concepts, this survey allows us to use a national survey of seminary graduates from 37 denominations and allows us to differentiate between various training programs. Unlike the Milwaukee survey, this sample is not limited to ordained clergy. Thus, for Catholics the sample will include diocesan priests, members of religious orders, and lay professionals. For both Catholics and Protestants, the sample will include professionals training for careers outside the local congregation.

Neither survey was designed to study clergy's personal piety and commitment, but each provides adequate measures to make an initial test of the two propositions. Do those trained at a seminary hold lower levels of piety and commitment than those not trained at a seminary? And, for seminary-trained clergy, what are the effects of the spiritual formation received at the seminary?

### Measures

Asking clergy if they received formal religious training, the Milwaukee survey allows us to compare clergy with formal training to those with none. The national ETS survey is limited



to seminary graduates, but distinguishes between 14 different degree programs, extending from nondegree and pretheology to Doctor in Philosophy and Doctor in Theology programs. We collapse degree programs into four categorical variables relating to the type and amount of training necessary to complete each. The degree categories include preseminary studies (pretheology, diploma/certificate, and nondegree), applied Master degrees (M.A.R./M.T.S., M. Church Music, M.R.E., and M.Div.), academic Master degrees (M.A., M.Div. + other, Th.M./S.T.M./S.T.L.), and doctoral degrees (D.Min., D.R.E./Ed.D., and Ph.D./Th.D./S.T.D.). Preseminary and applied Master degrees represent the most common seminary programs pursued in preparation for service in a local congregation.

For both surveys we tried to find measures on the spiritual formation received at seminaries. If Milwaukee clergy reported receiving structured religious training, they were asked to rate the amount of emphasis their training program gave to spiritual formation—using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = little emphasis” to “7 = much emphasis.” The ETS exit survey did not directly ask students for the level of spiritual formation at their school, but using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “not at all satisfied” to “very satisfied” the survey did ask respondents “how satisfied” they were with the “spiritual formation” received. It is important to note that 433 students (16.3 percent) did not respond to the spiritual formation question. The question instructed students to leave the item blank “if the school did not offer a service or you made no use of it.” Thus, item nonresponse in this case likely indicates the absence of spiritual formation training in the respondents’ seminaries. Recognizing the peril of missing data, though, we conduct analyses with and without corrections for these missing values.

Finally, we wanted to measure the personal piety and commitment of the clergy. For the Milwaukee survey we used an item asking clergy to report the amount of time they allocate for prayer and meditation each week. The ETS survey did not ask about current levels of piety and commitment, but did ask respondents to report any changes that had occurred since they entered seminary. The survey asked, “Compared to when you began this program . . . are you more or less interested or concerned about the following?” Respondents could offer five possible responses ranging from “a good deal less” (coded 1) to “a good deal more” (coded 5). We will use their responses to the items “trust in God” and “ability to pray.” A third measure of their personal commitment was their response to the question “my faith grew stronger” while in seminary. Here responses ranged from “strongly disagree” (coded 1) to “strongly agree” (coded 5).

We also measured a series of important demographic and denominational control variables. Age, race, and gender represent relevant controls. The ETS sample further distinguishes between race and ethnic categories (African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and other) and allows marital status comparisons between respondents who are single, married, or vowed celibate. The Milwaukee sample also allows us to control organizational factors, including employment status, tenure, church size, and compensation. Finally, the denominational categories of Catholic, traditional mainline, conservative mainline, sectarian, and African-American (ETS only) are entered into the final models (see Appendix A for a listing of specific denominations within each denominational category).<sup>15</sup>

## FINDINGS

Table 1 provides a descriptive overview of the Milwaukee clergy with and without structured training. When comparing the time devoted to prayer per week, the table shows a striking difference between those clergy with structured training and those without such training. Providing strong initial support for Proposition 1, the clergy with structured training devoted 2.2 fewer hours per week to prayer (a 33 percent drop) than those without structured training. Initially we thought these differences might be explained by denominational affiliation, reflecting sectarian clergy’s tendency to shy away from formal training. But, as shown in Table 1, the differences are even stronger within denominational groupings. When clergy receive structured training, whether they

**TABLE 1**  
**TIME DEVOTED TO PRAYER BY TRAINING AND DENOMINATION**

	No Structured Training	Structured Training	All Clergy	N
All Denominations	6.60 (5.28)	4.40 (3.27)	4.80 (3.80)	264
Denominational Categories				
Traditional mainline	5.50 (2.81)	3.27 (2.25)	3.58 (2.45)	86
Conservative mainline	**	3.44 (2.54)	3.55 (2.65)	55
Sectarian	7.56 (6.44)	4.62 (3.44)	5.92 (5.16)	61
Catholic	**	6.66 (3.72)	6.59 (3.69)	56

Note: Standard deviations are in parentheses.

\*\*Five or fewer cases.

are traditional mainline Protestant or sectarian, they report devoting fewer hours per week to prayer. Yet, Catholic clergy seem to defy this trend of increasing training and declining prayer. Despite requiring structured training of virtually all their clergy, the time devoted to prayer is second only to that of sectarian clergy without structured training.

Whereas Table 1 reports on all Milwaukee clergy, Table 2 limits our attention to the clergy receiving structured training. Here we list the time they devote to prayer and the amount of emphasis spiritual formation received at their seminary. Two results should be highlighted. First, the results provide tentative support for Proposition 2. The denominational groups reporting more emphasis on spiritual formation at their seminaries also tend to report higher levels of personal piety (time in prayer). Second, Catholic and sectarian clergy receive more spiritual formation in their seminaries and devote more time to prayer than the traditional and conservative mainline.<sup>16</sup> Because Table 2 is confined to clergy with structured training, however, the Catholics report far higher rates of prayer than any other denominational category. Consistent with previous work, we suggest that the high occupational demands for becoming a Catholic priest (i.e., the vow of

**TABLE 2**  
**SPIRITUAL FORMATION AT SEMINARIES AND TIME DEVOTED TO PRAYER BY DENOMINATIONAL CATEGORIES\*\***

	Prayer	Spiritual Formation	N
Denominational Categories			
Traditional mainline	3.27 (2.25)	4.13 (1.63)	88
Conservative mainline	3.44 (2.54)	4.86 (1.46)	57
Sectarian	4.62 (3.44)	5.54 (1.26)	38
Catholic	6.66 (3.72)	5.68 (1.33)	58

Note: Standard deviations are in parentheses.

\*\*Includes only pastors with structured training.

**TABLE 3**  
**EFFECT OF RELIGIOUS TRAINING ON MILWAUKEE**  
**CLERGY PRAYER AND MEDITATION PRACTICES**

	Prayer Model 1	Prayer <sup>a</sup> Model 2
Structured training	-2.644** (0.708)	—
Spiritual formation	—	0.462** (0.134)
Demographic controls		
Age	0.725* (0.359)	0.204 (0.350)
Nonwhite	-1.084 (0.851)	-0.859 (0.983)
Female	-1.336 (0.986)	-1.026 (0.931)
Full-time	1.186 (0.766)	1.061 (0.686)
Years in ministry	-0.302 (0.342)	-0.232 (0.326)
Church membership	0.031 (0.137)	0.031 (0.120)
Church salary	-0.424 (0.292)	-0.204 (0.258)
Denominational controls		
Traditional mainline	(omitted)	(omitted)
Conservative mainline	-0.129 (0.636)	-0.523 (0.546)
Sectarian	2.035** (0.684)	0.165 (0.683)
Catholic	2.486** (0.852)	2.247** (0.745)
Constant	4.515** (1.499)	1.097 (1.267)
N	242	200
R <sup>2</sup>	0.229	0.282
F	6.224**	6.722**

Note: Coefficients reported are unstandardized ordinary least squares estimates. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.

<sup>a</sup> Model 2 includes only clergy with structured religious training.

+p < 0.10; \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01.

celibacy) help explain the high levels of personal piety (Finke 1997; Stark and Finke 2000). The high entry costs screen out those with only tepid commitment and the lack of familial constraints offers more opportunity for spiritual development at the seminary and beyond.

To sort out the effects of training, spiritual formation, and denomination on the piety of Milwaukee clergy, we turn to multivariate models. Table 3 uses data from the Milwaukee survey to test both propositions. The first model finds strong support for Proposition 1. Even when controls are entered for denomination, size of church, years of experience, clergy salary, and a

series of demographic variables, the effect of structured training on clergy piety is strong, negative, and highly significant. With the controls entered, structured training reduces the amount of time devoted to prayer by more than 2.6 hours per week. Being Catholic or sectarian retained a strong positive effect, with the effect being 2.0 hours for sectarian clergy and 2.5 for Catholics. Of the remaining control variables, only age achieved statistical significance, holding a weak positive relationship with prayer.

Model 2 offers a test for our second proposition, including only clergy who have received structured training. This proposition argues that spiritual formation at seminaries fosters personal piety and religious commitment. Again, the Milwaukee survey provides clear support. Spiritual formation has a strong, positive, and highly significant effect on piety. For Milwaukee clergy receiving structured religious training, an emphasis on spiritual formation as a part of this training bolsters prayer. Furthermore, when spiritual formation is entered into the model, the strong effects of sectarian affiliation disappear. The strong coefficients for Catholicism remain, however, suggesting that the Catholic effect goes beyond the higher levels of spiritual formation they receive at the seminary.

Although not shown in Table 3, we ran several additional equations that were of interest. First, the Milwaukee survey asked several other questions about training at the seminaries, such as emphasis on theology, social activism, and practical skills. None of these variables showed a strong relationship to the clergy's time allocation to prayer. Second, when marital status (1 = married, 0 = not married) was entered into the equations of Table 3, the coefficients for Catholicism remained positive, but dropped to insignificance. This suggests that the vow of celibacy, combined with higher levels of spiritual formation in the seminaries, helps to explain the high level of piety reported by Catholic priests. Because the correlation between marital status and Catholicism was 0.825, we did not enter both measures into the final equations reported in Table 3.

Using the ETS national survey of seminary graduates, Table 4 provides an additional test of our second proposition. As reported earlier, the ETS survey did not provide any direct measures of piety practices, but it did ask respondents if, after attending seminary, they are now more interested or concerned about a trust in God and the ability to pray and if their faith grew stronger. The measure for spiritual formation was also far from ideal, asking respondents how satisfied they were with the spiritual formation they received. Unlike the Milwaukee survey, the ETS study includes all seminary graduates. This excludes pastors without seminary training and includes seminary graduates that will not serve as congregational pastors. Yet, when compared to the Milwaukee survey, the ETS study offers the advantage of a large national study (2,657 seminary graduates) and allows us to look at graduates from a variety of seminary degree programs.

Despite the weak measures of the ETS survey, spiritual formation is a powerful predictor of each form of piety in Table 4. The more satisfied students are with the spiritual formation they received, the more they reported increasing concern and interest in each of the measures of piety. Lending support to previous research and to the cumulative effect of acquiring religious capital, the degree program also had a consistent effect, with the piety measures declining for students graduating with Academic Masters or Doctoral Degrees. Under the demographic controls, we again see the positive effect of age for most measures of piety. But the ETS survey also displays the positive effects of ethnicity. The variables of African-American, Hispanic, and Asian all have a strong positive effect on trust in God. The effect for each variable is reduced for explaining the ability to pray and is largely insignificant when explaining the measure faith is stronger.

Denomination also has some influence, but this influence pales in comparison to spiritual formation. With spiritual formation excluded, sectarian seminarians report higher levels of trust in God and stronger faith than do traditional mainline seminarians. But when spiritual formation is included, the sectarian effect is inconsistent, being positive, negative, and insignificant. Likewise, the modest, positive effects of conservative mainline and African-American denominations disappear when spiritual formation is entered in the equations. The coefficients for Catholics are weak for all of the equations. The weak Catholic effect is explained, in part, by the seminarians

**TABLE 4**  
**EFFECT OF SEMINARY TRAINING ON SEMINARIANS' PERSONAL PIETY**

	Trust in God		Ability to Pray		Faith Stronger	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Preseminary studies	-0.079 (0.124)	-0.137 (0.126)	0.004 (0.131)	-0.075 (0.129)	0.102 (0.132)	-0.060 (0.126)
Applied Master degrees	(omitted)	(omitted)	(omitted)	(omitted)	(omitted)	(omitted)
Academic Master degrees	-0.144** (0.046)	-0.132** (0.049)	-0.092+ (0.049)	-0.104* (0.050)	-0.211** (0.050)	-0.260** (0.049)
Doctoral degrees	-0.302** (0.068)	-0.253** (0.078)	-0.166* (0.073)	-0.171* (0.081)	-0.206** (0.075)	-0.211** (0.080)
Spiritual formation	—	0.203** (0.016)	—	0.307** (0.016)	—	0.340** (0.016)
Demographic controls						
Age	0.007** (0.002)	0.004* (0.002)	0.010** (0.002)	0.005* (0.002)	0.007** (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)
African-American	0.477** (0.065)	0.455** (0.067)	0.290** (0.069)	0.231** (0.069)	0.149* (0.070)	0.063 (0.068)
Hispanic	0.446** (0.102)	0.334** (0.099)	0.228* (0.108)	0.074 (0.101)	0.168 (0.109)	0.031 (0.099)
Asian	0.355** (0.069)	0.330** (0.068)	0.188* (0.074)	0.153* (0.071)	-0.082 (0.074)	-0.133+ (0.069)
Other race	0.203* (0.099)	0.237* (0.105)	-0.037 (0.105)	-0.100 (0.108)	0.015 (0.105)	0.034 (0.105)
Female	-0.017 (0.036)	-0.002 (0.037)	0.049 (0.038)	0.051 (0.038)	0.034 (0.039)	0.042 (0.037)
Vowed celibate	0.183+ (0.101)	0.174+ (0.105)	0.199+ (0.107)	0.150 (0.108)	0.214+ (0.108)	0.173 (0.106)
Denominational controls						
Traditional mainline	(omitted)	(omitted)	(omitted)	(omitted)	(omitted)	(omitted)
Conservative mainline	0.108+ (0.059)	0.020 (0.061)	-0.003 (0.063)	-0.123+ (0.063)	0.139* (0.063)	0.0004 (0.062)
Sectarian	0.238** (0.047)	0.121* (0.049)	0.050 (0.050)	-0.109* (0.050)	0.201** (0.050)	0.037 (0.049)
African-American denominations	0.063 (0.106)	-0.046 (0.114)	0.211+ (0.114)	0.112 (0.118)	0.188+ (0.113)	0.071 (0.114)
Roman Catholic	0.099 (0.073)	0.011 (0.077)	0.165* (0.078)	0.021 (0.080)	0.097 (0.078)	-0.060 (0.078)
Constant	3.689** (0.071)	3.183** (0.084)	3.222** (0.076)	2.462** (0.087)	3.679** (0.076)	2.797** (0.085)
N	2,309	1,970	2,313	1,973	2,280	1,958
R <sup>2</sup>	0.078	0.144	0.046	0.190	0.033	0.215
F	13.770**	21.991**	7.900**	30.648**	5.514**	35.429**

Note: Coefficients reported are unstandardized ordinary least squares estimates. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.

+p < 0.10; \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01.

being surveyed and the controls entered. Unlike the Milwaukee survey, the ETS study includes Catholics who have not taken a vow of celibacy and are not studying for the priesthood. The survey did, however, ask respondents if they were “vowed celibate.” This control was entered into each of the equations, showing a weak positive effect. Prior to entering a control for celibacy, Catholic seminarians report higher levels of trust in God, ability to pray, and stronger faith. Again, this points to the importance of celibacy in explaining the piety of Catholic clergy. Regardless of the models reviewed, however, spiritual formation is the strongest predictor of seminarians’ piety. Thus, seminaries shape the personal piety as well as the intellectual beliefs of their students.

### CONCLUSIONS

The training of clergy has been a source of debate for centuries. For the past two centuries alone, seminary education has been subjected to the disdain and ridicule of most American sect movements, and has been an ongoing target of a debate for virtually all American denominations. Recent debates have frequently centered on specific classroom teachings. Seminary teachings on the inerrancy of the Bible, the role of women, and acceptable moral standards for behavior have all been the target of intense scrutiny. Yet, we have argued that the effects of the seminary go far beyond the confines of specific teachings. We suggest that the enduring social networks, the attention to spiritual formation, and the promotion of a specific religious culture all have an enduring effect on the seminary graduates. To explain the “effects of a seminary education” we used historical and contemporary examples, combined with survey data, to illustrate how seminaries provide clergy with social and religious capital that is distinctive from that of the laity. We find that a theoretical model using social and religious capital helps to identify the effects of a seminary education and to explain the variation in effects across denominations.

Using the concept of social capital, we argue that seminary training removes clergy from an exclusive relationship with the congregation to a larger, external social network. Whereas the seminary-trained clergy rely on professional networks (i.e., other clergy provide social support, a point of reference, and advancement opportunities), the lay clergy are more tightly embedded in the social networks of the local congregation. Thus, seminary education increases the social closure of the clerical profession, but decreases the social closure of the local congregation. The result, we argue, is that seminary-trained clergy will be more restrained by the norms of the profession and less restrained by the distinctive norms of the local congregation.

By dividing religious capital into two components, we were able to distinguish between training that stresses a mastery of the religious culture and training that emphasizes an emotional attachment to the religious culture (Stark and Finke 2000). The *mastery* of the religious culture, which includes instruction in religious doctrine, religious history, and the performance of rituals, is emphasized by all seminaries. As just noted, for denominations relying on seminary training, this has been the most frequent (and heated) topic of debate and research. When seminary training promotes teachings not held by those in the pew, conflict results. But acquiring religious capital includes more than a cognitive learning of a religious culture; it also includes an emotional attachment to the culture.

This second component of religious capital, the emotional attachment to the religious culture, is less amendable to the seminary classroom. Referring to people’s confidence in and commitment to their religious culture, this form of capital is typically accumulated through religious practices and experiences: worship, prayers, rituals, miracles, and mystical events. Typically referred to as spiritual formation at seminaries, the attention given to this form of religious capital varies widely across seminaries.

This research has pointed to two important findings about clergy and their emotional attachment to their religious culture. First, clergy with no seminary training place more emphasis on this form of religious capital. We found that clergy with no structured training devote 6.6 hours to prayer and meditation each week compared to 4.4 hours for those with seminary training. When

entered into an OLS equation with appropriate controls, structured religious training remained a strong negative effect on the amount of time devoted to prayer and meditation. Second, the emphasis seminaries give to spiritual formation has a lasting effect on the clergy's reported commitment to and practice of their religious culture. Using the Milwaukee survey, we found that the seminary's emphasis on spiritual formation has an enduring and powerful effect on the time clergy spend in prayer. Furthermore, we found from the national ETS survey that the effect of spiritual formation is highly significant on seminarians reporting an increasing trust in God, an increasing ability to pray, and a stronger faith, regardless of the controls entered.

This research has also documented the variation across denominations in the commitment and personal piety reported by the clergy, with Catholic and sectarian clergy reporting the highest rates. Although Catholic laity are similar to mainline Protestants in their practice of prayer and other forms of piety, their clergy more closely resemble the sectarian clergy. The lack of structured training and higher levels of spiritual formation tended to explain the higher levels of piety for sectarian clergy. But for Catholic priests, virtually all clergy were required to receive structured training and their piety was only partially explained by the higher levels of spiritual formation in seminaries. We argue that the vow of celibacy screens out those with marginal commitment and provides the clergy with more opportunity for spiritual development and practice, due to the lack of familial constraints. Yet, even for Catholics, the spiritual formation of seminaries was a major force in explaining the personal piety and commitment of the clergy.

Although the debates over the effects of seminaries have typically centered on the easily documented classroom teachings, this research has shown that seminarians are infused with distinctive social and religious capital that goes far beyond the classroom.

#### APPENDIX A: DENOMINATIONAL CATEGORIZATION

*Catholic:* Polish Catholic Church and Roman Catholic Church.

*Traditional Mainline:* American Baptist Church; Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Congregational; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Episcopal Church; Mennonite; Presbyterian Church, USA; Reformed Church in America; Society of Friends (Quakers); United Church of Canada; United Church of Christ; United Methodist Church; and Unitarian Universalist Association.

*Conservative Mainline:* Christian and Missionary Alliance; Christian Church/Churches of Christ; Church of the Brethren; Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; Russian Orthodox Church; Serbian Orthodox Church; Southern Baptist Convention; and Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

*Sectarian:* Apostolic; Assembly of God; Salvation Army; Church of God; Church of the Lutheran Confession; Church of the Nazarene; General Conference Baptist; Regular Baptist; Missionary Baptist; North American Baptist; Evangelical Covenant; Evangelical Free; Independent; Interdenominational; Metropolitan Holiness Church; Nondenominational; Pentecostal; Seventh Day Adventist; and Wesleyan Methodist.

*African-American (ETS only):* African Methodist Episcopal; African Methodist Episcopal Zion; National Baptist Convention; and Church of God in Christ.

*Other:* Conservative Judaism; Reform Judaism; various New Age groups; and other affiliations.

#### NOTES

1. The data were downloaded from the American Religion Data Archive (ARDA). For more information, see [www.TheARDA.com](http://www.TheARDA.com).
2. It was no secret that the great majority of Baptist and Methodist ministers had little education. The 1853 *Baptist Almanac* estimated that in 1823 only about 100 of the 2,000 Baptist clergy had been "liberally educated" and the famous Methodist itinerant, Peter Cartwright (1856:408) estimated that at the General Conference of 1844 fewer than 50 (of approximately 4,282 traveling ministers) "had anything more than a common English education [grade school], and scores of them not that."

3. The 1871 *Baptist Quarterly* provides a survey of Baptist opinion on an educated clergy (see Finke and Stark 1992:76).
4. Donald E. Miller (1997:166) reports that Smith could also be sharply critical of seminary education. When several pastors of expanding megachurches were pursuing Doctorate of Ministry degrees, Smith was quoted as saying, "If they get enough education, maybe they'll bring their congregations down to a manageable size."
5. For a helpful discussion on the dilemmas seminaries face in making organizational changes, with implications for organizational theory, see Rhys Williams (1998).
6. But when seminaries stray from their original founding mission or teachings, it is due to more than an allegiance to intellectualism. Professionalizing the role of clergy leads to isomorphism. Religious organizations, such as the seminary, are not exempt from these pressures to homogenize individuals in like positions (Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Stout and Cormode 1998). The standards by which seminaries and seminarians are judged are now a product of competing institutions as well as supporting congregations.
7. Although the conceptual definition has varied, discussions of social capital are pervasive throughout the social sciences, with major theorists Pierre Bourdieu (1991), James Coleman (1988), and Glen Loury (1977) all introducing the concept into their work.
8. When Laurence R. Iannaccone (1990:299) first introduced "religious human capital," he defined the concept as "skills and experiences specific to one's religion, includ[ing] religious knowledge, familiarity with church ritual and doctrine, and friendships with fellow worshippers." We revise Iannaccone's definition in two ways. First, we distinguish between social capital (friendships) and religious capital (knowledge and familiarity). Second, we highlight the importance of an emotional attachment to a particular religious culture.
9. According to Southern folklore, after a young seminarian concluded his prayer for "copious showers," a local deacon was asked to pray. The deacon confessed in his prayer that he didn't know what copious showers were, but what he thought they needed was a "pine knot floater and nubbin stretcher" (as quoted in Phares 1964:134).
10. White clergy's stances on race relations, both past and present, serve as one example. Sydney E. Ahlstrom (1975:93) reports that at the 1784 Christmas Conference, American Methodism "instituted measures to exclude slaveowners or dealers from membership." He goes on to write that Baptists, too, "have a similar history of forceful statements in the revolutionary period, followed by a steady accommodation of Southern practice." Conflicts over women's ordination show how external social capital can challenge organizational norms. Mark Chaves and James Cavendish (1996) note that the conflicts surrounding women's ordination escalated after 1970 due, in part, to the influx of women into divinity schools and seminaries. "Seminaries in the 1970s brought together women whose common education and shared grievances became resources for increased organization and group-sponsored actions" (Chaves and Cavendish 1996:576).
11. See Loury (1981) and Coleman (1990) for a discussion on the inalienability of most social capital.
12. We would stress, however, that when students enter the seminary they are not empty vessels, void of religious capital. Instead, they come to seminary with preexisting religious capital based on past religious socialization or service in lay ministry. Due to the desire to preserve religious capital (see Iannaccone 1990; Sherkat 1997), future pastors gravitate toward seminaries and seminary programs that align with their existing beliefs and expectations regarding the ministry. Seminaries add to and revise this base of religious capital.
13. Though data are scarce on the fit between clergy and congregation, Clifford J. Tharp (1985) reported that during an 18-month period, between late 1982 and early 1984, Southern Baptist congregations fired approximately 1,600 pastors. Of these, 71 percent were seminary graduates, although only 45 percent of all Southern Baptist pastors held seminary degrees in 1982 (Wingo 1984). Whether it is because of their training, their theology, or the selection procedure used, the local congregations are firing seminary graduates at a faster rate than those without the benefits of a seminary education. Also, see Robert C. Thompson (1974) for evidence that the distinctive religious capital of seminaries is cumulative.
14. Research on seminaries has found that the faculty from evangelical seminaries are united around conservative theology and issues of personal morality, whereas the faculty from mainline schools are united around issues of peace, justice, and inclusiveness (Carroll et al. 1997; Olson and Carroll 1992).
15. We exclude the denominational category "Other" from comparative analyses due to the small number of cases within this group.
16. Although not reported in the tables that follow, the ETS sample also found that Catholics place a strong emphasis on spiritual formation, especially those with a vow of celibacy. When asked to "mark the three most important influences on [their] educational experiences" from a list of 18 choices, spiritual formation was selected by 36 percent of vowed Catholics, 22 percent of nonvowed Catholics, 16 percent of sectarians, 15 percent of the conservative mainliners, 9 percent of the traditional mainliners, and 17 percent of the clergy from African-American denominations.

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