

## SECTION 5

### OUTSIDE THE THEME



From its inception, this journal has encouraged people to write out of their particular practice in order to develop a body of general theory about pastoral supervision. As the contexts and disciplines for supervision have broadened, it has become increasingly important that articles embrace a wide variety of issues in supervision. Balancing the general and the particular is an exquisitely delicate task. Whatever form of ministry practice you engage in, I promise you that you will learn about supervising in your own craft by reading what Joretta Marshall has written about supervising for pastoral counseling. It is remarkably comprehensive in its scope and yet very evocative in its focus. “Collaborative generativity,” as Marshall defines that metaphor, is a dynamic and life-enhancing process necessary for many expressions of ministry. Collaboration is generative because it leads to new and fresh theological and pastoral commitments.

Neil Sims had titled an earlier version of his essay “I Don’t Have Time to Read This” to emphasize the pressure on religious leaders that makes reflective practice so difficult. He proposes (and even insists) that ‘reflective practice’ is absolutely necessary for religious leaders of any tradition in any context. In order to make that case, he revisits and expands the work of Donald Schön on being a ‘reflective practitioner’ and challenges ministers to be attentive to reflection in many modes: *knowing-in-action*, *reflection-in-action*, *reflection-on-action*, and *reflection-for-action*. The practice of theological reflection, Sims suggests, ‘builds muscles’ for a lifetime of interpreting situations in order to discern the presence and purpose of God. Such disciplined practice of reflection is life-giving not only because it enhances competence but because it engenders hope in hard times.

Supervision is, among other things, a *rite of passage* that provides a framework for an individual to move from observation to participation, from being an untutored novice to measured competence. As with all initiatory rites, there is also a communal dimension to the process. “*Legitimate Peripheral Participation*” is the concept that Matt Floding and Glen Swier use to track how one enters a community of practice. “The newcomer’s participation at first is legitimately peripheral, but over time is centripetally drawn inwards and becomes more engaged and more complex until one becomes a full participant in a social community.” The authors describe the process of

becoming a member of a professional society to illustrate the transition from legitimate peripheral participation to the center of a community of practice. Although this is an intriguing and sensible idea, I wonder how it will work with the current under-30 generation whose experience is already authoritative and whose readiness for full participation at the center makes the periphery problematic.

The final two essays in the section examine adult developmental issues of ministry candidates for formation and supervision from two perspectives. Timothy Lincoln's essay examines the *life world* of first career seminarians under the age of 30. Individuals organize their perceptions of everyday life according to a commonsense interpretive frame (life world) shaped by cultural and social forces. Theological schools shape distinct life worlds for their students. Within the same life world, however, students will have very distinct and unique *life experiences*. Lincoln observes that the differences between first-career and second-career students suggest that theological educators would do well to provide robust mentoring and advising to first-career students to help them integrate the academic program, relationships with students, life outside of school, and ministry experiences.

Lorraine Ste-Marie has produced a significant, but complex, framework for thinking about adult development among theological students. Although the formation and education of religious leaders has always been about the development of adults; attention to adult development theory has been more implicit than explicit in the formation and education of religious leaders. The essay includes the results of a survey regarding the place of adult development theory in field education. For example, students who are more able to critique themselves and their practice of ministry are more able to do theological reflection. The contribution of this essay for anyone engaged in formation and supervision is the articulation of a complex framework for adult development created by Otto Laske. Although his approach may not work in every context, Ste-Marie uses the Constructive Developmental Framework to emphasize the importance of attending to development in adults. As the readership of *Reflective Practice* becomes more global, we will also need to be attentive to the ways in which the formation of adults is context-specific.

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