



Candidacy Working Group Know, Be, Do Executive Summary

Fall 2022

An online survey gathered data on 5 open-ended questions:

1. What do current and future leaders of the church need to know?
2. Who do current and future leaders of the church need to be?
3. What do current and future leaders of the church need to do?
4. What challenges do you see in forming leaders for the current and future needs of the church?
5. What opportunities and possibilities do you see for forming leaders for the current and future needs of the church?



Know, Be, Do Survey

Over 800 responses

The results on what leaders need to know, be, and do were affirming, insightful, and provocative.

Affirming

in that respondents identified that current and future leaders need many of the competencies that have been core for rostered leaders for decades. For example: it is key that a Lutheran theological foundation informs the ways communities of faith engage in mission and ministry. It is also important that leaders are self-aware and emotionally intelligent. What is less clear is how the essentials connect to the paradigm shifts taking place.

Questions: How do core Lutheran commitments and ministry competencies connect with the contextual realities leaders and congregations face? What level of "competency" is needed for all leaders, for rostered deacons and pastors, and for "SAMs"? While theological education and leadership development remains critical, is an M.Div. degree the only way to form these competencies? Could other pathways be imagined?

Insightful

in that there are themes that integrate what leaders need to know, be, and do. For example: many areas (like biblical knowledge, personal boundaries, ministry capacities) have knowing, being, and doing aspects. This is encouraging and challenging for the formation process and candidacy because different parties are responsible for (or take primary leadership in) the knowing, being, and doing of ministry. For example, seminaries are the primary leaders in teaching biblical studies, contextual learning sites (and specifically internship supervisors) support/evaluate candidate's biblical teaching and preaching, and forming faithful leaders around biblically-centered spiritual practices falls to the candidacy committee, congregations, and/or spiritual directors.

Questions: How might parties work more coherently? What practices would facilitate collaboration toward candidates development? What guidelines could focus/simplify the whole for the sake of fostering faithful rostered leaders for the current and future church?

Provocative

in that respondents recognized a need for new models of church, ministry, and leadership formation. These models must include: a) deep engagement the paradigm shifts taking place, b) discovering what it means to be church in a secular age when church is no longer in the center of society, c) engaging the community outside of the congregation, fostering cultural intelligence, and working on anti-racism, and d) equipping all of God's people to live their calling. Respondents wonder how forming and equipping God's people is done in this time, how ministry is informed by the specifics of each context, and how to be in relationship with people experiencing the impacts of systemic injustice or marginalization.

Questions: What impact do cultural shifts have on leadership formation and candidacy? What does it mean for "the church" (as a whole) to form leaders for the future while also raising up leaders (in particular) to lead congregations now? What aspects of the "emerging" competencies should be addressed at various stages of candidacy and by which parties? Could some competencies be attended in "first call" theological education?

The pinch points of candidacy do not seem to be rooted in what leaders need to know, be, and do, but rather in the ways theological education and leadership formation takes place AND the recognition that different pathways need to be designed for diverse callings/contextual needs. The data also suggests that more clarity is needed on how various parts of the systems interact, and who is responsible for each aspect of candidacy.