

# SEMINARY DEVELOPMENT NEWS

SPRING 2004 VOLUME 17, NUMBER 1

## INSIDE NEWS

Putting first things first  
1  
LYNN DONHAM  
*"Where do I start?" asked the theological school's new marketing director.*

From your Steering Committee  
5  
KIM TILL  
*Two great events are planned for 2004 and 2005!*

To succeed in our work  
6  
DANIEL ALESHIRE  
*The work primarily is nurturing a constituency, raising money, and demonstrating that theological education makes a difference in the lives of communities of faith. The money is going to come from new gifts from individuals and asking is a spiritual discipline.*

"Staying awake":  
10  
the vital role of development in theological education  
DONALD SENIOR  
*If it is important for good theological schools to be alert to grace in the complex world in which we live, then this responsibility gives great importance to the role of the development staff.*

## Putting first things first: marketing and communications for theological schools

by Lynn Donham

"Where do I start?" asked the theological school's new marketing director. The comments that follow address that fundamental question.

**Figure out where you stand.** Whether you call this a formal communications audit or just taking stock, find out who is on your team, your assets, your obligations, and your current marketing/communications activities. Pull a copy of every ad, brochure, and newsletter and put them in a notebook or on a table. Tag each item with the cost, purpose, and audience.

**Why are you here?** This is the institutional mission question, not Philosophy 101. If you are fortunate, your institution has a mission statement it uses every day, or at least one that can be dusted off and easily understood. If not, there's the place to begin. Gather a representative group together and answer the question "why did this institution begin?" in twenty-five words or less. Look at the addresses and writings of the founders and early presidents. Make this statement meaningful and brief. Get input and feedback from other key people: trustees, faculty members, and donors.

**Vision: where do you want to go?** If you have a clear mission, then your vision is how you're going to do it. What does your institution want to become? Where is it going? What *values* are inherent in the work of your institution's vision? Look again at the founding language, past and current leaders, old campaign materials, and so forth. The values will express how the institution accomplishes its mission. They also will be a touchstone for the look and feel of the marketing communications you eventually create. Make it coherent and consistent.



LYNN DONHAM is a senior client consultant with Stamats and is based in Atlanta, Georgia. She presented a pre-conference workshop at the 2003 DIAP Conference in Tucson, Arizona, from which this article is taken.

**The first step in the marketing process: positioning your institution.** Begin with an honest understanding of your strengths and weaknesses. Get others involved in talking about this—students, alums, colleagues at other institutions near or far away, influencers, and even past leadership. Is your location an asset? Is your denomination dynamic and growing or stagnant? What about your academic reputation? Your size? Look at every aspect of your institution and see which features belong in the plus column and which ones don't.

The strengths count only if they help you accomplish your mission. If you have the largest collection of genealogical material about the Shummelbaum Family and genealogists come from all over the country to use the special collections room but it doesn't help you recruit or raise support, then it doesn't count.

Now consider those strengths and weaknesses *vis-à-vis* your competition—in fund-raising, student recruitment, continuing education, community relations, and distance learning.

Positioning your institution means communicating those things about your institution that

*continued on page 2*



The Association of Theological Schools  
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

## Putting first things first. . .

*continued from page 1*

truly give it a competitive advantage. Positioning messages differ depending on the audience.

We know our constituencies consist of different kinds of people who want different things from our institution, so it makes sense that our messages should be different for each group or segment. This could be reflected not only in the language we use, but the music, the colors, and the medium we choose. All of these aspects relate directly to our individual target audience. All in all, it is about *building relationships*, something that advancement people understand right away.

**Integrated marketing**, the latest buzzword, just means that marketing and communications are done with greater coordination and shared goals and objectives. For most of you in small-to-medium-sized institutions, your size makes this easier.

**Product, place, price, and promotion: the sandwich shop.** You can read lots of academic and business texts that talk in great detail about the theory of these variables. For larger institutions, the complexities of these principles are very important, but for most theological schools, a basic understanding of the principles is enough to start. You know a lot of this instinctively; you just haven't thought about it this way.

So, for a moment, let's imagine you are opening a sandwich shop. What kind of sandwich shop would you want to open? A Subway franchise, an upscale shop with a health-conscious menu, or a truck that sells sandwiches at construction sites?

Next, think where you are going to locate it and why. You'll need to be thinking about who your customers will be and how you can make your shop attractive and convenient. Your location set, you need to figure out pricing. Find out what other restaurants nearby are charging. What do your prospective customers typically pay for lunch or dinner? If you are serving standard fare, you can't charge \$15 per sandwich (unless you have a captive audience in a theme park). If you offer seared tuna on foccacia bread with pesto sauce and avocado, you will have to charge more and you probably can.

Once you have all this sorted out, you open the shop. Is it enough to put a sign out front? Usually not. You have to promote your sandwich shop. Do you need to promote it on national television? In a large metro daily newspaper? If not, why not? If you have a sandwich shop in one section of your city, should it bother you that someone on the other side of town may never have heard of it? Or someone in the next town? Why not?

You are not done yet, though. Let's think about some other critical things to make your shop succeed. What is the shop like? Is it clean, attractive, cheerful? Are people waited on quickly? Do they have a good experience? Do they like your sandwiches?

*I hope you see the parallels to your work in theological education.*

**Savvy communication.** Here are a few basic rules of communication to keep in mind. (They work well with children and teenagers, too.)

- ◆ You must get their attention first.
- ◆ People pay attention to what they already are interested in.
- ◆ Keep your message simple.
- ◆ Get feedback whenever you can. (Is it working? Did they hear me?)
- ◆ Tell them, tell them, and tell them again.

If each office of your organization tells a different message, you lose the benefit of repetition and simplicity. So it's critical to get everyone working together. One popular approach is to form a massive task force to involve representatives from every nook and cranny and give them all decision-making power. Many institutions try this and are dismayed to find it unworkable.

Another approach is to gather those already interested in tackling the problem. Talk and discover where you are of like mind, work through some of the key questions, and begin a program with the resources you have. In institutions where little has been done, people can be very receptive and supportive. The remainder of the campus often sees your success and wants to know, "how can I be a part of this?"

**A foundation of research.** Some of you may be wondering whether you need to do market

research before you do a communications plan and a new marketing effort. The more you know, the better, but the critical question is: do you know enough to answer the critical questions?

You have a couple of advantages in doing market research. Your constituencies are more likely to respond, making a survey more successful and interviews more valuable. Even a survey via the Internet is likely to have a good response if the survey is easy to answer. Follow a couple of practical guidelines in doing research.

- ♦ Research one audience or segment at a time. Use that information to set your basic goals.
- ♦ Research questions that give you answers you need to make decisions, set goals, and choose direction.
- ♦ Use qualitative and quantitative research—they provide different kinds of information.

A warning about research: you never can do enough. It's easy for you or your colleagues to think that everyone should know about you. In reality, awareness matters only with those in your target audiences. Their awareness of your institution is very important. The more prominent your institution is with your audience, the more quality they associate with your school.

Use tools available to you—on-line surveys, mail surveys, focus groups, telephone interviews, and continuing feedback forms from various events and programs. Work all of them into your program; each will give you different information.

**De-mystifying branding.** To me, the best definition of a brand is a promise spoken and unspoken. Larry Lauer, at Texas Christian University, writes in *Competing for Students, Money, and Reputation: Marketing the Academy in the 21st Century* (CASE 2002) that your brand is name awareness plus identifying defining impressions. If people are not aware of your institution, your task is more difficult. You have to get their attention and start from scratch, explaining who you are, what you do, and why they should care.

With most of my clients, I do not use words such as "branding" and "segmentation." I talk

about things in plain English, as if I were explaining them to my college classics professor or my pastor. Whatever you call it, don't underestimate the power of a well-established brand. Several years ago, someone put cyanide in a Tylenol bottle, creating a nationwide panic and prompting the company to pull its product off the shelves. What a crisis for a company that had built its brand as a safe and gentle pain reliever. It is a testament to the strength of the brand and the company's actions that Tylenol rebounded and pioneered the tamper-proof bottle that is now an industry standard.

Or consider Mailboxes, Etc. which, for the last three years, has been owned by UPS. In a pilot project, UPS changed the name of these stores to "The UPS Store." Business increased 70%. The company now is converting all its stores.

**CASE studies.** While this newsletter does not allow space to share case studies, you can look at the websites of a number of institutions and marketing/communications agencies to see examples of good work. Start by looking at your ATS sister schools, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), and even the American Marketing Association (AMA).

**Getting it done. What are your options?** Some institutions determine that they have significant and urgent needs that require outside professional help to assess their institutional position, develop branding, create a marketing communications plan, and execute its major components.

If you decide not to use an outside marketing firm, you must take the lead. Your research should point you to the most pressing issues and target audiences. Gather your key communications group together and agree on what needs attention first. Look at the funding and personnel resources available to tackle it. Review what you are doing now, and what ideally needs to be done to achieve a concrete, measurable goal—usually one that will improve your income stream. Develop a plan for that area alone and get it going. Be sure to brainstorm how all kinds of media and communications could be used for your purposes. First generate lots of ideas; then pare them down to the most practical and effective.

---

## Don't miss your next issue of SEMINARY DEVELOPMENT NEWS!

*Have you moved?  
Or is there a new  
member of your develop-  
ment staff  
who would like to  
receive Seminary  
Development News  
on an ongoing basis?*

*Please e-mail new  
addresses and changes to  
Mary McMillan  
at the ATS office  
<mcmillan@ats.edu>.*

*Past issues of this  
newsletter are  
available online in the  
"Publications" section  
of the ATS website.*

*[www.ats.edu](http://www.ats.edu)*

---

*continued on page 4*

## Putting first things first. . .

*continued from page 3*

Perhaps you determine that you should hire staff. If you can add only one person, hire a writer/editor/organizer who understands your school and works well with people. It is easier to work with an outside graphic designer to create a look than to work on a communications program without someone who can articulate the message.

As you move forward, here are a few communication rules to live by.

1. **Like sandwiches**, the quality of the finished product is seldom better than the ingredients. Start with good stuff—good photography, good stories that matter to the target audience, and say something *really* important about your institution. Make sure to use good printing or reproduction.

2. **Tell the truth**. The complexities of running an institution do not always allow us to be unreservedly open about everything all the time, but what we say should be true. Be credible. Be trustworthy. If it is bad news, be the first to tell your constituents, and be as honest as possible.

3. **Be ethical and be faithful**. Money is important to all our institutions, but do not sell your soul or its soul for any amount.

4. **Less is more**. All of your constituents are busy people who lead complicated lives with many demands on their time and attention. Keep your communications short, simple, and direct. Be visual more than verbal. If you do not have the resources do to something in color well, do it well in black and white.

### 5. **Stay focused on your key message and goals.**

Just as in parenting and teaching, we understand that messages must be repeated and demonstrated, taught and re-taught, to be absorbed and learned. People “get” things at different times and in different ways. Tell your story in fresh ways.

6. **Encourage creativity and teamwork**. Appreciate and reward it. See God in all things and in those around you. You are creating an upward spiral that will carry you, your staff, your colleagues, and your institution forward.

7. **Write things down**. Make a communications plan. It can always be changed and updated. Keep track of your progress and accomplishments.

8. Finally, **stay inspired**. If the first thing in your mind upon waking is an overwhelming “to-do” list, I offer the following as an alternative to ponder.

You are not a troubled guest on this earth; you are not an accident amidst other accidents....

What you can plan is too small for you to live. What you can live wholeheartedly will make plans enough for the vitality hidden in your sleep....

Give up all the other worlds, except the one to which you belong, and learn that anything or anyone that does not bring you alive is too small for you.

—David Whyte,

*What to Remember on Waking SDN*

## Auburn requests “Case statements”

**A**uburn Seminary’s Center for the Study of Theological Education has begun research on seminary institutional advancement practices in the United States and Canada. Anthony Ruger and Sharon Miller are the principal investigators for this project.

Through analysis of available data, site visits, interviews, and a survey of development officers, they will be examining the techniques, costs, best practices, and barriers to effective fund-raising in theological schools.

The project is in its early stages and they welcome questions and suggestions. As a beginning step, they would like to collect “Case Statements” used by development officers in approaching donors—please send them a copy! Updates on the progress of this research will be found in future newsletters.

For more information, please contact: Sharon Miller, Associate Director, Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education; 3041 Broadway; New York, NY 10027; <slm@auburnsem.org>; Phone: 212-662-4315, Fax: 212-663-5214 SDN

# From your steering committee: mark your calendars

by Kim Till

The DIAP Steering Committee is looking forward to two great events planned for 2004 and 2005.

For development officers who are new to development and have worked in theological education for fewer than three years, a special seminar is being offered September 13-14, 2004 at the offices of ATS in Pittsburgh. Richard DuBose, vice president for development and seminary relations at Columbia Theological Seminary, is joining us to address the fundamentals of successful fund-raising as well as keys to organizing an effective development program. We will also enjoy a keynote address by Daniel Aleshire, executive director of ATS.

Work is well underway for the 2005 DIAP Conference which will be held in Fort Worth, Texas, February 17-19. We want to take advantage of the wealth of fund-raising expertise in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

The conference will feature a great mix of topics led by development professionals as well as by our peers who will share from their experiences, specifically dealing with theological education.

We are going to begin with a pre-conference workshop on *Major Donor Development* led by a veteran in development, Andy Read. He is the president of the Evangelical Development Ministry and has twenty-five years of experience as a fund-raiser and consultant.

To close the conference, we are pleased that Fred Smith Jr. is planning to join us. He is the president of The Gathering, an annual conference of philanthropists who meet to discuss giving and stewardship issues. To receive an invitation to The Gathering, an individual, family, or a family foundation should be giving a minimum of \$200,000 annually to Christian



KIM TILL is executive director for advancement at Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas, and serves as Chair of the DIAP Steering Committee.

ministries. As the host of this group, Fred knows what makes major donors tick, and he will give us great insight into building relationships with our key donors.

The theme of the 2005 conference is *Stewardship*. Woven through our time together will be thought-provoking discussions on "faith and money" and the role our institutions play in integrating stewardship principles into the daily life of the church.

As a special highlight, we are hosting a tour and reception of Fort Worth's renowned Bass Performance Hall. This beautiful concert facility is a tribute to a community-wide capital campaign, and we will learn how it was managed and what made it a success. We will even have the opportunity to attend a performance featuring the Broadway musical *Grease*.

Mark your calendars to join us for some Texas hospitality next February!

On behalf of all of us on the DIAP Steering Committee, we look forward to supporting you and your efforts to raise the funds your institution needs to accomplish your God-given mission. Please don't hesitate to contact any of us if we can serve you in any way. SDN

ats

## STEERING COMMITTEE

of the Development and Institutional Advancement Program

**Julie L. Anderson**  
Development Officer and Director of Annual Fund, Duke Divinity School, Durham, North Carolina

**Raisaac G. Colon-Rios**  
Director of Development, Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, San Juan, PR

**Heather Cooke**  
Director, Finance, Administration, and Development, Queen's Theological College, Kingston, ON

**Richard Eppinga**  
Senior Development Officer, Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan  
*ex-officio*

**Scott Sheldon**  
Director of Development, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey

**Leroy Solomon**  
Dean of Institutional Development, Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, Ohio

**Kim Till, Chair**  
Executive Director for Advancement, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas

**Frank Vita**  
Director of Development, St. Peter's Seminary, London, Ontario

**Dale Zschoche**  
Associate Vice President of Advancement, Director of Seminary Development, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa

ats

# To succeed in our work

by Daniel Aleshire

Often, I have had conversations with prospective presidents of ATS schools. Each of these conversations goes something like this: we talk about the school, the presidency, and whether I think this is a good match of school and candidate. We talk about the work, as I see it from my role at ATS, and the school.

In the course of the conversation, I say the president's work at this school will primarily be nurturing a constituency and raising money. We talk some more, discuss the school's many contributions, its unique problems, and I will say again, the primary job of the next president of this school will be nurturing a constituency and raising money.

We talk a little longer and focus on the opportunities the presidency might provide for the candidate, and I say: whether or not you want to remain on the list of candidates depends on how much you want to nurture the school's constituency and raise money.

I don't receive many calls from prospective development officers because they don't seem to cross my path before they show up in the schools, but from what I can tell, development work in theological education requires two deep and pervasive characteristics in development officers. The first is a commitment to theological education with a clear sense of why it is important and a convincing perspective about the value of theological education for communities of faith. The second is skill and knowledge about the technology that effective development work requires.

My experience is that development officers tend to come to theological education from one of two backgrounds—either they are development professionals who have come newly to theological education or they are church or seminary professionals who have come newly to development work. Each year our DIAP Conference has about 25% first-time attendees, which says something about the turnover in this work. The people who succeed over the long-term in seminary development are the people who develop both sides of their job identity.

So, with this conviction about your work, I want to make six observations.



DANIEL ALESHIRE is the executive director of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

## First, the old way in which US and Canadian theological schools derived their income has dissipated, and it's not going to come back.

Most schools derived most of their money from denominations, and denominations are not going to vote anytime soon to return to the levels of funding they had in the 1950s and 1960s. Schools need to develop new patterns of funding.

To deal with this change, I think ATS schools—particularly Protestant schools—have found additional money in two ways across the past twenty-five years. The first involved adding new degree programs and taking more seriously the income that could be generated from tuition, particularly tuition provided by degree programs other than the M.Div. Many schools also established new sites or campuses that extended the reach of existing degree programs to new markets.

The second way in which seminaries derived new income was by riding one of the most—if not the most—dramatic and extended rise in the stock market that has ever occurred, at least in the United States. If schools were spending prudentially at five percent of their endowments' value between 1990 and 2000, and were reasonably positioned in equity holdings, they would have doubled or tripled the value of their endowments even if no new money were added. While this was not the case with many schools, the number of ATS schools that had new operating money simply because of the increase of endowment values is substantial. The market has demonstrated that what it gives, it can take away and schools heavily dependent on endowment income have found themselves constricting budgets, not expanding them. There has been sufficient recovery, however, that schools are ahead of where they were a decade ago, if not three years ago.

As we continue to move into this first decade of the new century, my hunch is that neither of these income generators of the past twenty years will be income generators for the next twenty. I don't think we can expect the kind of stock-value increase over the next twenty years that occurred in the past ten. Neither do I think that most ATS schools will be as successful at identifying new degree products in the next twenty years as they have been in the past twenty. For the most part, while enrollment slowly grows in ATS schools, it is not likely to grow sufficiently fast that schools will experience perceptible gains in tuition revenue.

So, where is the money going to come from if not the denominations, new degrees, locations nor students, and if not as a function of market growth?

It will come—as it already is—from individuals who have resources, care about their church, and want to ensure the quality of ministerial and priestly leadership in the future. The primary source of gifts in the future will continue to be individuals and a few congregations that have a kinship with a particular seminary or to theological education in general. However, as pressure on congregational money increases and congregations are faced with a choice between funding increased expense for medical coverage for their staff or continued contribution to a seminary operating budget, medical coverage will win every time. So, in the final analysis, the money will come from individuals and it will come from individuals who have a reason to be loyal to an institution. Remember the word *individuals*; they give far more money to charitable causes than foundations or any other source of gifts. Individual givers, individual gifts, individuals for whom God invented the gospel.

**Second, these significant changes in the revenue structure of ATS schools require the development of a culture of realism about funding.** The money is not going to come from the denominations, so there is no use complaining about the fact that it is not coming from denominations. The money, at least not the amount that is needed, is not going to come from tuition. We already are worried about the student educational debt that is directly related

to tuition revenue. Soon-to-be-released results of a ten-year follow-up study of student debt by the Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education indicate that more students are graduating with seminary educational debt, and that the average amount of debt has doubled in the past decade. The money, for the most part, will not come from tuition. The market does not always go up, so it will not come from the growth of endowments. The money is going to come from new gifts from individuals, and seminaries need to be realistic about their primary funding base.

*So, where is the money going to come from if not the denominations, if not new degrees or locations or students, and if not as a function of market growth?*

A culture of realism also requires a change in the deep narrative about the kind of work to which senior leaders in seminaries must give their energy. Some presidents think of development as a diversion from their real tasks rather than the heart of their real tasks. One ATS president resigned a few years ago, in part because he had come to realize that his responsible work for the school was fund-raising, and that was not his best gift or calling in ministry. I think faithfulness in presidential work—guided, supported, and complemented by effective professional staff in development—is not possible apart from being at peace with the need to cultivate a constituency, and when the need and moment are right, ask for their gifts. This is the real job.

It needs to be a major allocation of the president's time. Remember, presidents need to raise money and they depend on you to help them do that job.

**Third, because most money will come from individual donors, ATS seminaries will need to enhance their capacity to make a compelling case for theological education.** The case for theological education has been called into question in many ways with different constituencies of ATS schools. Evangelicals look at successful new paradigm churches and note that their leaders did not learn what they know

*continued on page 8*

## To succeed in our work

*continued from page 7*

in seminaries. Mainline Protestants are dealing with membership decline by creating ways for clergy to be credentialed alternatively in which they do not need a seminary education. Roman Catholics, while holding tenaciously to seminary for the ministerial priesthood, are not so inclined for thousands of lay professionals who are being employed by parishes to do what priests and religious were doing forty years ago. In all three of these major contexts, there is a serious question about and, at times, active disregard for seminary education.

The case for theological education will need to be made by the schools themselves and not by communications and development officers, but let me tell you what I think the case will require.

Theological education needs to make its case by engaging in the educational and institutional efforts that will demonstrate that theological education adds value, meets needs, and makes a difference in the lives of communities of faith. Theological schools cannot hold back the forces that are asking the question about the value of theological education, but they can educate their students in ways that ordinary people recognize the difference a seminary education makes and, out of that recognition, wish it were possible for every religious leader to have a seminary degree.

Development officers need to make the case for theological education with enthusiasm, integrity, and some intellectual imagination. They will not, however, be able to *make up* a case for theological education. Theological schools must become their own best case. This case, in its best form, is not as obvious as the case for a cure for the sick or feeding the hungry. It does not make itself known to potential donors, so it requires thoughtful work and development officers who are deeply and personally committed to it. Remember, seminaries have to be the case and you have to make it to donors.

**Fourth, schools need the technology of institutional advancement and they depend on your professional expertise for this technology.**

There are good and bad ways to run an annual campaign, or capital campaign. There is an expertise necessary to raise deferred gifts. Professionalism in seminary development requires you to know which of the many development strategies are appropriate and effective for theological schools and, in particular, for your school and its constituency. ATS schools vary significantly from one another. There are schools that only recently have given themselves permission to have an endow-

*Theological education needs to make its case by engaging in the educational and institutional efforts that will demonstrate that theological education adds value, meets needs, and makes a difference in the lives of communities of faith.*

ment—a move away from the conviction that endowment inevitably distances a school from the constituency or convictions that it was brought into existence to serve. There are schools that receive more than eighty percent of their operating revenue from endowment. There are still a few schools that receive more than eighty percent of their operating budget from a denomination, and other schools that receive more than fifty percent of their operating budget from the annual fund or current giving programs. These differences in revenue streams do not merely reflect different development strategies, but also different theological convictions, different degrees of connection with different kinds of constituencies, and different institutional histories. These revenue patterns are different for reasons other than technology, but each requires a technology to be effective. Remember, development officers need to bring professional expertise to the school's development program.

**Fifth, presidents and development officers need to nurture the discipline of asking for money at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way.** In my judgment, this discipline of asking is, at its root, a *spiritual discipline*. I have not needed to be the kind of fund-raiser you are needing to be and my comment may be both untutored and unfair, but I don't think one can be effective at nurturing relationships as a

means of cultivating donors for theological education without treating this effort as if it were a spiritual discipline. The temptation, on the one hand, is to nurture relationships in a way that manipulates individuals for the sake of their potential gifts. That is unchristian. The temptation, on the other hand, is to nurture the relationship so that the president or development officer has a new set of interesting and wealthy friends, but they never help their new friends benefit the school to the extent that they are able. The only way to avoid these two temptations is to treat this work as work that grows out of one's spirituality. Remember, asking for money is a spiritual task, not a material one.

**Sixth, you work at the wealthiest theological schools in the world.** It probably doesn't feel that way, but you do. Wealth is always relative and when you look at institutions focused on education of church leaders, none of them in the rest of the world has wealth that compares to what we have in the United States and Canada. However much wealth our schools have, it is not as much as needed to do the work well. Theological schools look pretty poor compared to other segments of higher education in the United States and Canada. The schools need more money—that is why you have been asked to assume the responsibilities you have undertaken. However, the mission of a theological school is not to be wealthy. It is to educate, research, and serve the church and the broader public. This means that development work is always about the relationship of money and mission. Your task is to find and guide the acquisition of wealth that will best serve the school's mission for the longest period of time because these schools will need more money next year than they need this year. The expense budgets of ATS schools doubled in the decade from 1991-2001. It is not completely clear to me why they doubled, but I am sure that more money is going to be required in the future to do theological education well. Our choice is to do it poorly, which is always cheaper, or to do it well, which requires imagination, money, and talent. Remember, money is about mission.

**In conclusion,** the Apostle Paul had some good instincts about fund-raising. He wasn't afraid to ask: Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel in this generous undertaking (with reference to the offering that Titus was in the process of receiving; see II Corinthians 8:7). In addition, he had a sense of the mutuality of Christian philanthropy: it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance (he says to the givers) and their need, so that their abundance (the receivers') may be for your need (the givers) (II Cor. 8:14). While this may not be the kind of sparkly language with which an article like this should close, Paul's words voice the spirit of our work. Theological schools have serious financial needs and as those needs are met, they develop an abundance that communities of faith desperately need. *SDN*

---

SEMINARY DEVELOPMENT NEWS is published twice a year by the Development and Institutional Advancement Program (DIAP) of The Association of Theological Schools (ATS). The mission of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada is to promote the improvement and enhancement of theological schools to the benefit of communities of faith and the broader public. *Seminary Development News* supports the mission of the Association by informing seminary personnel about current trends and issues in theological education institutional advancement. The newsletter is distributed to all ATS member school presidents and development officers, and to foundation personnel.

*Seminary Development News* welcomes submissions of unsolicited manuscripts on any aspect of development in theological education. Manuscripts should be typed, double-spaced, and 800 to 1,600 words in length (three-to-six typewritten pages) and if at all possible submitted via electronic mail to the address below. All manuscripts will be scheduled for publication at the editor's discretion and will be edited to conform to the newsletter's style and format. Unaccepted manuscripts sent to the editor via the postal service will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope, affixed with the proper postage. The deadline for submissions is eight weeks in advance of each issue, as follows: March 1 for the May issue and October 1 for the December issue.

Address all correspondence to Richard Eppinga, Seminary Development News, 3233 Burton Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 (616-957-8592, [reppinga@calvinseminary.edu](mailto:reppinga@calvinseminary.edu)).

EDITOR  
**Richard Eppinga**  
Calvin Theological Seminary

EDITORIAL BOARD  
**Rebekah Burch Basinger**  
Fund-raising Council and Board Education  
**Lisa Kern and Nancy Merrill**  
The Association of Theological Schools  
**Kevin Moynihan**  
Atlantic School of Theology  
**Daniel Schipp**  
Saint Meinrad School of Theology  
**Terry Walker, Sr.**  
Interdenominational Theological Center

# “Staying awake”: the vital role of development in theological education

by Donald Senior

For many years, I served happily on the faculty of Catholic Theological Union. Then one day, about fifteen years ago, I was drafted to be president and my life has never been the same. Coming into the job, I had hardly thought about the task of fund-raising. If I did, I probably would have thought of it as a necessary evil, but I don't now, after a couple of major capital campaigns and many years of this work. Development work is one of the responsibilities of my role that I find most satisfying and at the heart of the matter. I welcome the opportunity to reflect along with development officers about this noble task we share and to do so particularly in the light of the Scriptures.

At the end of the so-called apocalyptic discourse in the thirteenth chapter of Mark's Gospel, Jesus and his disciples are sitting on the crest of the Mount of Olives and looking across the Kidron Valley to the breathtaking view of the Herodian temple, one of the wonders of the ancient world for its size and beauty. Aware that his own passion was about to begin, Jesus tells the parable of a man who goes away on a long journey and when he suddenly returns, finds the staff of his household unprepared. Jesus concludes his discourse by warning his disciples to “stay awake”—“What I say to you, I say to all: stay awake!”

While the import of Jesus' words may have been part of his admonishment to the disciples to be prepared for the end of the world and the Son of Man's triumphant return at the consummation of history, these words also advise the community to be alert in the here and now—awake and watching for those impulses of grace that break unexpectedly into our world. Awake and watching for the signs of the time and for opportunities for the gospel to be proclaimed. Unfortunately for the disciples in the Gospel of Mark when the events of the passion begin to unfold, they sleep while Jesus prays earnestly in the Garden of Gethsemane. The impact of the passion causes them to break and scatter but Jesus, alert to what is happening and fortified by prayer, moves forward courageously to the summit of his mission.

This virtue or stance of “alertness” or “attentiveness,” as Simone Weil referred to it, is an important virtue and one that I think has significance for us as people engaged in the work of development. I am speaking of being alert, watchful, and attentive in the midst of the chaos and promise of our world to see there the presence of the Risen Christ. This may seem to some to be an odd topic for a conference



DONALD SENIOR is president of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Illinois, and a member of the ATS Executive Committee.

on the work of development in theology schools, but let me take a crack at it.

## Reluctant stewardship

As many of you know, more than ten years ago, Lilly Endowment conducted a study to determine the attitudes of Protestant and Catholic seminarians and pastors toward the responsibilities of fund-raising and administration within the range of their pastoral duties. The results were published under the title *The Reluctant Steward*. As the title indicates, most of the target audience recognized the theoretical importance of such matters, but preferred not to have to deal with them. They did not see fund-raising or administrative duties as being at the heart of their pastoral work nor did they consider them a source of satisfaction.

Recently, this study was revisited by Dan Conway and his associates and a whole new survey was conducted, a decade after the first. While there had been some improvement, the researchers concluded that the stewards—Protestant and Catholic pastors and the seminaries and agencies responsible for their academic and pastoral formation—are still “reluctant.” Many pastors continue to feel awkward and under-prepared about fund-raising and the administrative duties required by their roles. They also still have ambivalence about how to address such “reluctance,” admitting that more practical training is needed at the seminary and in-service levels, but not having much enthusiasm for such educational experiences themselves. By and large, seminaries and church judicatories land in the same spot: recognizing this is an important pastoral concern, but not sure how and where to tackle it.

## Grasping the wider context

An experience I had a couple of years ago has become something of a parable for me whenever I think about pastoral leadership and such practical matters as money, fund-raising, and the nuts and bolts of administration. We had a retreat weekend

for our board members and one of the sessions focused on the profile of a “typical” urban Catholic parish in the United States.

Our presenter was a priest-sociologist with a sure grasp of the demographic data and a good pastoral sense. Based on census data and other studies, he commented on the circumstances and experiences likely to shape a contemporary congregation: stresses and strains on marriage and child-raising, divorce rates, dating patterns, incidence of addiction to alcohol and narcotics, notions of authority and volunteerism, quality of religious education, influence of media, and so forth. It was an impressive list, laid out on a grid that appeared to touch every aspect of modern life. However, when the speaker opened the floor to discussion, one of the lay members of our board raised his hand and said, “One thing is missing from your list—*work!*” The awkward silence that followed was eloquent commentary. How could one overlook something that commands people’s time and shapes their attitudes and aspirations in such a profound way?

But silence about work and professional life—and all of the practical realities about money and management that go with it—is not uncommon in the pulpit and in the consciousness of many pastoral leaders. That little is said in the pulpit about the experience of working for a living is a consistent lament from laity. Preachers may feel they have little to say about one of the most defining experiences of their parishioners’ lives, and parishioners may wonder if any significant connection can be made between their faith and their professional and work-a-day lives.

This is one symptom, I believe, of an underlying problem that connects with the reasons why many pastoral leaders shy away from talking about money or fund-raising and find little meaning in the administrative dimensions of their ministry. Part of our problem may be that we have not thought through how these practical realities fit into our own vision of Christian life, much less into our roles as ministers of the gospel and pastoral leaders of Christian communities. We do give proper attention to more explicitly religious domains such as doctrine, prayer, worship, spirituality, and such crucial experiences as marriage and family. I do know that, in my own experience, the transition from full-time teaching of Scripture to an administrative role as president was a revelation for me of how little I had thought about financial and administrative responsibilities as part of my vocation as a minister of the gospel and a theological educator.

The skills necessary for administration of a parish and the willingness to ask for financial support on behalf of a congregation are not identical and each has its own requirements and challenges, but

diffidence about such tasks may arise from a wider common context, namely how the ministers or priests envision the place such practical realities have in relation to their own Christian life and vocation.

Here is where I think the notion of attentiveness or staying awake comes in. Believing that God is present in history, believing that the Word became flesh means that we must be attentive to all of the significant dimensions of human life and their meaning for discipleship. Being aware of the practical realities of human life, including money and jobs, is not just an antidote to naiveté, but a responsibility of anyone whose mission is to proclaim the gospel.

#### **The meaning of money and the meaning of giving**

This alertness to reality must surely extend to something as fundamental to modern human life as money. Yet what money means to us is one topic that receives relatively little consideration in theological circles.

A few years ago, when I was asked to write on this topic from a biblical perspective, I could find few in-depth studies, particularly from Roman Catholic authors. (My own effort can be found in “Financial Support for the Church and Our Biblical Heritage,” *New Theology Review* 9 [1996] 38-51. Some of the following reflections on money are adapted from an essay I prepared for *The Reluctant Steward Revisited*). Too often, theological evaluation of money and its role in human experience can be confined to a prophetic evaluation of the dangers of wealth as a seduction of Christian values or as a symptom of inequity. Speaking too directly about acquiring money in some religious circles can seem a bit unseemly, and so is often referred to in euphemisms (“institutional advancement” or even, perhaps, “stewardship”). Vigilance about the misuse of money is, of course, a valid perspective rooted in the gospel, but it does not exhaust the meaning of money in human experience or in Christian life.

Money has complex and diverse meanings in various cultures on both a personal and social level, but some fundamental meanings stand out in our western culture. For example, one way to think of money and other material possessions is to view them as *extensions of our person*. Some philosophers and theologians have reflected on the meaning of our bodies as extensions of our spirit or soul. That is, body and spirit are not separable components that make up the human being, but the body is an expression of our spirit—we are embodied beings. We extend our body in outreach and embrace as we mature and develop in our relational capacity.

Furthering this view, we can think of our possessions—properly used—as extensions of our bodies. Our clothing, our home and its furnishings, our

*continued on page 12*

## “Staying awake” . . .

*continued from page 11*

automobile, and our financial resources themselves are means of extending our own physical and spiritual being into a wider sphere of communication and influence. Investment of money allows a person to project his or her influence into the future, and a bequest or trust allow donors to continue to have an impact on an institution, a cause, or a loved one even beyond their own lifetime.

Another function of money in our society is as a *means of gauging the value or significance of one's work*. The CEO of a major corporation will earn a staggering salary under the assumption that his or her leadership will ensure the company's profitability. The craftsmanship and materials that go into a Lexus make it more expensive than a Chevy Malibu. A brain surgeon earns more than an orderly. Here, too, the amount of money attached to a particular type of work or product can reveal a false evaluation on the part of the marketplace.

Are the huge amounts of money given to sports figures based on an accurate assessment of their worth or are such salaries driving the whole enterprise into bankruptcy? In addition, factors other than money can signal the importance or value of one's work. The salary of the President of the United States is insignificant alongside some corporate and media salaries, but there are a lot of perks and signs of prestige that clearly signal the importance society attaches to that office.

One other important meaning attached to money in our society is its role as a *medium of exchange and a symbol of relationship*. “Exchange” is an important value in our economic culture and money is the medium of exchange. This is clear, of course, when we exchange money to purchase some goods or services, but there are also more subtle forms of exchange. For example, when we tip the waiter in the restaurant in exchange for good service or, in a more compromised example, when someone hoping to win a city contract slips an envelope of cash across a politician's desk. Lots of earnest Christians send donations to religious shrines or to television evangelists in the hope that some favor or cure might result. Such “exchange” can take place even in the most altruistic and gracious circumstances and here money can be symbolic of love and friendship and the medium of an authentic gift. The money tucked with love in the card given to grandchildren on their first communion or graduation, or the donation given to a church or school as a sign of support and solidarity express love and commitment. In these instances, money becomes the medium through which the donor expresses his or her relationship to a treasured cause and, in return, those who give experience an affirmation of their own worth, feel the satisfaction of doing good, and are able to stand in solidarity with people and causes they believe in.

These commonplace symbolic dimensions of money (which certainly do not exhaust its range of meaning) illustrate its importance in daily human experience. The use of money is closely connected with human productivity, self-expression, and self-worth and it is interwoven with some of our deepest and most powerful relationships. Money enables us to extend our reach, for better or worse.

Recalling these meanings attached to money can also lead us into a proper theological assessment of what charitable giving means. The Bible itself has a fairly nuanced view of money and wealth and it incorporates some of the symbolic dimensions

*As any good preacher should do, when in doubt about his pastoral strategy, Paul decided to take up a collection!*

mentioned above. Many strands of the Bible consider wealth as a sign of blessing from God, but the Scriptures also recognize that wealth can be acquired at the expense of the poor or deaden our attentiveness to the needs of others, as in Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). The lure of wealth could consume people, claiming their ultimate allegiance—the famed “mammon of iniquity” (see Matthew 6:24)—and deluding them into a false sense of security or self-sufficiency (as in the parable of the rich man and his barns in Luke 12:16-21). Jesus' stance of leaving behind the securities of home and resources is a prophetic challenge to such illusions. The “poor in spirit” recognize the ultimate truth of one's dependency on God for all life and every resource.

At the same time, the Scriptures do not demonize money and are filled with exhortations for those with resources—either goods or money—to share them with those in need. As you know, ancient Israel itself had a fairly sophisticated and complex system of tithing to ensure that the temple and its priesthood and the social and charitable institutions surrounding it were suitably financed. The giving of alms is one of the most important expressions of piety for both Israel and in the teachings of Jesus. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus thoroughly endorses the giving of alms while warning against doing it for warped motives (see Matthew 6:2-4). In these instances, money becomes a medium for expressing one's solidarity with a brother or sister. Descriptions of the ideal community of Jerusalem in Acts have the members sharing all things in common so that no one would be in need (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35), a reflection of the biblical vision for the covenant community of Israel.

I feel a special bond with Paul these days. One of Paul's most elaborate pastoral initiatives was the collection for the “poor” of Jerusalem. As any good

preacher should do, when in doubt about his pastoral strategy, Paul decided to take up a collection! The money given by the Gentile churches signified for Paul not only the commitment to take care of those in need, but was also an expression of solidarity among the churches and a recognition of an “exchange” whereby the Gentile communities acknowledged the gift of faith they had received from the mother church in Jerusalem (on Paul’s references to the collection see Romans 15:25-30; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-24; 9:6-15; Galatians 2:10). Even further, Paul considered the money given by the Gentiles to the Church of Jerusalem a means of investing in God’s mysterious plan for the salvation of the world by first helping plant churches in the Gentile world and then, through them, bringing the gospel to Israel and thus completing the circle of God’s loving embrace of humanity.

Paul’s recognition of the symbolic dimensions of money had a strong precedent in the texts and practices of Judaism. Money was one medium of sacrifice, and practices such as tithing and the annual temple tax were key expressions of Jewish solidarity with one another and with God.

This all too brief reflection on some of the biblical notions of money simply suggests that the meaning of money is complex and subtle. Money can be a sign of corruption or distorted priorities, but it can also be a means to extend one’s power to do good to others and be expressive of the most gracious spiritual sentiments. I had many years of theological education under my belt before my ordination, but I do not recall ever hearing a discussion about the meaning of money. Yet money courses through our lives and that of our fellow Christians on a daily basis. To get beyond the diffidence many pastors feel about asking for money will require more thought be given to what money means to us as Christians in the first place.

Hand in hand with understanding the meaning of money is understanding the meaning of *giving*. As Robert Lynn asked in his commentary on the original *Reluctant Steward* study, why should we give at all? (Robert W. Lynn, “Faith and Money: The Need for A New Understanding of Stewardship,” *The Reluctant Steward*, p. 31). It is a question to be posed not only for potential donors, but also for those whose responsibility may be to invite people to give. When we recognize that one of the crucial meanings of money in our culture is self-expression and an extension of our own personal capacity, then giving money to a cause or community is understood not just as a tax or a sacrifice, but as a sign of solidarity and commitment. This puts the spotlight on the worthiness of the cause and the trustworthiness of those who lead the community. It is an axiom of fund-raising that donors give to people

and to causes they trust. Recent studies of giving patterns confirm that confidence with how the church manages its money and reassurance about what it is used for are critical for member satisfaction. From this perspective, giving money to a Christian community or institution that uses it well enables Christian donors to lead authentic Christian lives. They are giving of themselves for the sake of the other—the very heart of the Christian ethic.

*When we recognize that one of the crucial meanings of money in our culture is self-expression and an extension of our own personal capacity, then giving money to a cause or community is understood not just as a tax or a sacrifice, but as a sign of solidarity and commitment.*

Giving, then, is an expression of discipleship—one of the fundamental principles rightly affirmed in all stewardship programs. Conversely, reluctance or refusal to give can be a sign of an undeveloped Christian life, the inability to transcend oneself for the sake of the other or, in some instances, may be a practical judgment on the part of the Christian community about the trustworthiness of its church and its leaders.

Thus, money and giving are experiences deeply entwined with ordinary human experience. Practical economic realities are on the minds and hearts of people every day of their lives. Within the seminary community, it should be noted that it is the development staff—along with the business office and worried administrators—that deals with these defining human experiences on a daily basis as an essential part of their mission and purpose.

#### **Reality check for theological education**

In his wonderful book *Life Together*, the Lutheran theologian, pastor, and modern-day martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, emphasized the need for anyone who wanted to be part of an authentic Christian community to have a firm grip on reality. You may remember that he wrote this brief book as a rule of life for a clandestine seminary hidden from the watchful and hostile eyes of the Gestapo. Its mission was to create a new generation of pastoral leaders who would be able to take a prophetic stance against the evils of National Socialism. In his chapter on “community,” Bonhoeffer warns against “wish dreamers”—those who, as he says, are more in love with the ideal community of their own dreams than they are with the actual community that God gives them.

*continued on page 14*

**ats**

## “Staying awake” . . .

*continued from page 13*

I am convinced that this is important advice for all theological schools that are preparing men and women to bring the gospel to the world. All of us need a sense of reality. We cannot afford to be “wish dreamers.” We need to be alert and knowledgeable about the world we now live in—not a dream world, but the world that God gives us now.

Sound theology and active theological reflection can certainly take us deep into this world and its ultimate meaning, but so too can a wise and empathetic understanding of contemporary human experience—the realities men and women face each day of the struggles to be authentically Christian not simply in the environment of a seminary or religious institution, but especially in the homes and marketplaces of our complex society where money and giving are an integral part of human experience. For the Catholic community, this was the clarion call of the Second Vatican Council’s famous decree on the *Church in the Modern World* that began with these words: “The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men and women, of men and women who, united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, press onwards towards the kingdom of the Father and are bearers of a message of salvation intended for all people.” (*Gaudium et Spes* #1).

Obviously, seminaries and schools of theology need to construct and protect an environment that allows students to be intellectually nourished and spiritually formed in an atmosphere of relative serenity and with time for reflection and contemplation. Providing for just such an environment is a major responsibility of school administrators and their development staff, but at the same time, theological schools cannot afford to be isolated or create an interior world that is not in touch with the realities of people’s lives. The membrane that separates the world of theological education from the everyday world of human experience must be permeable. Theological schools, in my view, should have around them a corona of human experience—a circle of friends, donors, and pastoral agents who provide a sacred reality check and prevent the onslaught of “wish dreams” so those preparing to proclaim the gospel will not forget the nature of the church as the incarnate Body of Christ.

The need for theological education to be in touch with the reality of the church, of the world, and of the human lives of the people the church must serve is more urgent than ever. In a world where issues become ever more complex and interwoven and proximate, we need to be alert: global eco-

nomics realities that influence the closing of a factory near you, complex ethical issues created by the advances of modern medicine that come crashing down on a couple deciding about the birth of a Down-Syndrome baby detected by ultrasound, or an adult son or daughter facing end-of-life decisions for a parent whose life is being sustained by artificial means, or leadership issues about how to bring together a parish composed of diverse and sometimes warring ethnic factions or the dilemma of an investment manager selecting stock opportunities for a religious institution that wants to be both ethical and financially healthy. It is not only a matter of being aware of such issues, but also learning from the experience of thoughtful Christians who wrestle with such issues on a daily basis and being in a position to support and nourish them and their lives of faith.

### **Being alert and the role of the development staff**

If, for these and many other reasons, it is important for good theological schools to “stay awake,” to be alert to the opportunities for grace in the complex and beautiful and tortured world in which we live, then this responsibility gives great importance to the role of the development staff within a school of theology.

Obviously, the prime responsibility of a development staff is to help ensure that a school of theology has the resources it needs to carry out its primary mission. No one needs to instruct you on the importance and the challenge of such a responsibility, but there are other dimensions intimately related to and flowing from the direct work of fund-raising that make the role of development so vital to the heart of a school of theology.

First of all, the development staff, along with the president and other key members of the school’s staff, constitutes a vital link between the school and the people it will serve. Donors, church and civic leaders, vendors—these are the constituents of any good development program. Development staff interact with such people on a daily basis in a way that few faculty, students, or other staff can. In a very true sense, the development staff is the go-between, or matchmaker, that helps interpret the world and language of theological education to the wider public and the concerns and longings of the wider world to those immersed in theological education. I sometimes think of development staff as those “scouts” that used to be an expected part of any good western movie that involved settlers or army troops and Native Americans. The scouts often had to restrain either an impulsive and uncomprehending army commander or the leader of a wagon train from wantonly attacking the Native Americans, or the scout had to plea with his Native American friends to try to understand what the palefaces were up to. The scouts knew the

languages and customs of both worlds and tried to bring them together or, at least, to alert one or the other to what was at stake in the encounter about to take place. In a certain way, the scout belonged completely to neither world and could move comfortably and knowingly between the two.

This interpretive, go-between role is more vital today than ever before. The development staff, more than most other sectors of a theological school, has the ability to interpret the world of theological education for the wider public and, conversely, to interpret for the school of theology the human experience of the world the school of theology is meant to serve. For those who view this role from the vantage point of Christian faith, such a go-between role is not merely an exercise in good communication or marketing, but an expression of discipleship. It is being responsive to Jesus's instruction to the disciples to "stay awake," to be alert to the presence of grace and the opportunities for service that abound in our world. It is a way of being ready and helping to equip others to be ready for the unexpected coming of Christ into our midst.

If being "scouts" on the terrain where theological education meets the world is an opportunity for those in development work, it also entails a responsibility. Anyone who works in development knows the importance—and sometimes the challenge—of maintaining rapport with faculty and students, having to translate the language of the marketplace into the language that is acceptable for pastoral ministry, having to make a case for the style and content of an appeal for funds, having to temper stereotypes that theological students have about those in business and, likewise, of helping those in the business and corporate world shed stereotypes of their own about people who choose a life of ministry. This skillful balancing act, I want to suggest, is an expression of the gospel. It is evangelization on a most necessary and vital level, and not accidentally, such skill is also usually symptomatic of a successful development program.

This ability to live in both worlds, understand and mediate both worlds, and thoughtfully interpret and challenge both worlds is precisely the wisdom and art that "Reluctant Stewards"—our present and future pastors—need to learn. It is a gift that successful development officers often have and which they can and should offer to the seminary community.

Being open to a different world, learning from it, respecting it, and bringing our world into communion with others is a work of the Spirit. I am struck how often the Scriptures testify to this kind of transformative process. Peter encounters the Roman Centurion Cornelius at Caesarea Philippi and, in accepting him into the community, opens

the door to Gentile Christianity. A troubled group of apostles in Jerusalem calls Peter on the carpet for baptizing Gentiles like Cornelius and the apostle had to interpret for them what the Spirit has led him to do. Based on Peter's testimony, the whole assembly suddenly understands a new truth: "If this be so, then God has granted life-giving repentance even to Gentiles," they exclaim as the penny drops! Sleepless in Troy, Paul listens to the voice of a Macedonian who appears to him in a dream and decides to cross the sea to Europe and there to encounter Lydia and her companions. The church would never be the same. Mary, startled yet alert, listens intently to the message of Gabriel about an experience she could never dream of and because of her "yes," the world would never be the same. Fishermen cleaning their nets find their hearts awakening to the invitation of a Galilean preacher and healer and they are prompted to leave everything to start a new life.

And Jesus himself? Do not the gospel stories time and again show us how the pleas of the sick and disabled, the insistence of a Syro-Phoenician woman in behalf of her desperately ill daughter, the plight of a Gadarene demoniac, the openness of a Capernaum tax collector, or the question of an inquiring scribe reach across the boundaries of experience and culture and touch the heart of Jesus and help define his own mission of teaching and healing? Jesus, who had none of these roles, could speak with empathy and insight into the tortured love of a parent for his lost son, of a steward about to lose his job and lining his nest for the future, of a woman desperately searching for a lost coin, and of corrupt judge who would do justice to a widow only for the sake of an uninterrupted night's sleep. So many of Jesus's images, in fact, are economic and practical: wine stewards concerned about dwindling supplies, rich farmers putting their bumper crop into barns, pearl merchants and hidden treasure, taxes for the temple and the Romans, staggering debts and conflicts over inheritances, alms for the poor, and the tithing of mint, dill, and cumin (that Jesus endorses, by the way), and of talents wasted or developed. Interpreters have noted that, in his parables, Jesus speaks of God only sparingly, but instead concentrates on human experiences of loss and gain and desire and uses these—like home movies—to find there reflections of the divine.

These are the actions and stories of one who was himself awake and alert—ready for the kairos, the moment of opportunity when grace breaks into the world. Our noble work in the area of development, and the skills and opportunities it entails, can help our seminary communities also to be ready and alert and responsive to God's people, and in so doing we pay homage to the Word made flesh.  
*SDN*



The Association of Theological Schools  
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

10 Summit Park Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1103

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Pittsburgh, PA  
Permit No. 686

# DIAP EVENTS 2004 & 2005

## WORKSHOP 2004

for new development officers. . .

*3 pm Monday, September 13 to*

*4 pm Tuesday, September 14,*

**2004**

- ♦ ATS Office  
Pittsburgh, PA
- ♦ Featuring Richard DuBose
- ♦ Registration is limited

## CONFERENCE 2005

*Thursday ~ Saturday,*

*February 17 ~ February 19, 2005*

- ♦ Radisson Plaza  
Fort Worth, TX
- ♦ "Stewardship for all it's worth..."
- ♦ Watch mail for more details

*Sponsored by*



The Association of Theological Schools  
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

The Development and Institutional Advancement Program (DIAP)