

SEMINARY DEVELOPMENT NEWS

SPRING 2005 VOLUME 18, NUMBER 1

INSIDE NEWS

What I have learned
about development 1
LAURA S. MENDENHALL
*This is the best part of my
job.*

From your Steering
Committee:
Networking—iron
sharpening iron 3
LEROY SOLOMON
*Proverbs 27:17 reads “As
iron sharpens iron, a friend
sharpens a friend.” What a
great description of DIAP!*

What I have learned
about development 4
THEODORE J. WARDLAW
*It’s being there when that
light goes off in people’s
hearts and minds and they
realize that they can make a
gift that is nothing short of
transformational.*

From one generation
to the next 6
REBEKAH BURCH BASINGER
*The seminary world is
littered with sad stories of
the consequences of failing
to reach out to the sons and
daughters of long-time
donors.*

A biblical perspective
on givers and giving 8
FRED SMITH JR.
*There is a diversity of giving
styles in Scripture and
different ways of thinking
about stewards and donors.*

Connecting with
alums 10
CAROLYN CRANSTON
*Phonathons require
advanced planning, detailed
organization, and an
atmosphere of enthusiasm.*

What I have learned about development

by Laura S. Mendenhall

Development work is like a funeral.

Five years ago I was a pastor, wrestling with a conversation with the search committee from Columbia Theological Seminary regarding its need for a new president. If I took the job, I would have to give up the privilege of preaching week after week to the same group of faithful disciples. I grieved deeply even the idea that I would never again be able to place the waters of baptism upon those being presented as children of God. I knew there would continue to be many committee meetings—no escape from those—and I was ready to be released from the weekend regularity of weddings, many of which had become pageants more than sacred commitments.

What I never imagined was how much I would miss funerals. I have done many funerals and on each occasion, no matter how tragic the loss, how complicated the responses of the bereaved, it is a moment of profound truth telling. To stand at the graveside and proclaim that in life and in death we belong to God—this is what it is all about. No faking it at a funeral, and I have found that I personally need to come to such a moment regularly—need to have to say where I stand. Without such moments my days slip by as if they were mine, to do with as I please, tossing one here and one there until I come up against something real—death, tragedy, a need for reconciliation that I cannot fix.

I need moments of truth, like at a funeral, in order to live fully, vibrantly, and meaningfully. Because I am no longer serving as a pastor



LAURA S. MENDENHALL is president of Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. She and fellow seminary president Theodore J. Wardlaw addressed development officers at the February 2005 DIAP Conference in Fort Worth.

who regularly conducts funerals, I lean on *stewardship* in order to have moments of truth-telling that keep me alive. Stewardship is like a funeral—where we get down to the basics, to the essence of what we believe. This is not a game for me. It is more than simply knowing the seminary’s case and how to present it. I ask for gifts for the seminary because this is about what we do with the gift that is our life, about truth telling, about what is real, about what we believe—like at a funeral.

When the ask is right, folks thank us.

Asking for gifts for what God is doing at the seminary is not really so different from what I did as a pastor in asking someone to teach the four-year-olds’ Sunday School class, to serve on a committee, to bring dessert for a special event or, now, to give \$2 million for a new faculty position. It is all about finding a match between people’s gifts and the needs of the church. It means sitting still and listening until we are able to understand what they believe is important and how they want to join in what God is doing.

continued on page 2



The Association of Theological Schools
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

What I have learned about development

continued from page 1

Our job is to help them find a way to make their offering. When we are able to open a way for folks to offer their gift for Christ's service, they end up thanking us for helping them do what they really wanted to do but didn't have the courage or vision to imagine the difference they could make for generations to come.

- ♦ Thanks for asking me to teach. Who knew that four-year-olds could do so much for a sixty-four-year-old?
- ♦ Thank you for asking for my casserole for the dinner at church; no one at my house will eat it.
- ♦ Thank you for asking me to give beyond my congregation. My family has received enormous pleasure in giving to the seminary the largest gift we ever have given.

That's exactly what our donors say, "I give to the church, to my schools, to the Salvation Army, the Symphony, and the hospital, but nothing gives me such pleasure as giving to the seminary." Those who consider the work of the development office as a necessary evil in order to make payroll don't understand that this is more than making a budget. This is giving people an opportunity to be part of what God is doing in ministries around the world, and more often than not, donors say "thank you for inviting me into something that is so important."

Raising money at a seminary has to be a team effort.

The work began before any of us was working at the seminary, and many of the benefits of our labor will come in long after all of us have moved on. Neither is it the work of the president alone nor solely the responsibility of the development officer. Faculty, students, and alums also have a role to play.

The president and the development officer, however, carry the heaviest load and so have to be able to work together, trust each other, let the other make the connection, edit each other's writing, play devil's advocate for each other, be encouraging when the other is down, and make long trips together. The success or

failure is not about one person but is a team effort.

Development work is not a sprint but a marathon.

When I came to Columbia Theological Seminary nearly five years ago, a significant amount of work already had been done toward a capital campaign. We had a master plan but not real clarity on much more than buildings. In order to give me time to catch up, we slowed things down, took the time to get the faculty and board in conversation with each other, set priorities, developed a case for more than buildings, and ended up changing the master plan and completely reworking the buildings. The campaign is a couple of years behind the original plan; however, we now have a very tight case that makes raising the money crucial. We can put together a proposal for a donor with a couple of days' notice because the case for the campaign is now completely integrated into all we do. We're in this for the long haul.

This is the best part of my job.

A president has a variety of tasks that involve dealing with multiple constituencies. For me, the best part of the job is inviting people to participate in what God is doing in this little corner of the world where I live. In many ways, it takes less energy than dealing with faculty squabbles or student dilemmas and takes less preparation than speaking before church bodies. It is perhaps the most authentic part of my work, inviting people to invest in what God is doing to prepare pastors and leaders for Christ's ministry for generations to come.

I have much more to learn....SDN

From the DIAP Steering Committee: Networking—iron sharpening iron

by Leroy Solomon

What a great conference DIAP participants experienced in Fort Worth in February! We were blessed by a fine pre-conference workshop and excellent plenary speakers. We gained knowledge and skills from informative workshops, and we met some new (and old) friends.

I began attending DIAP conferences ten years ago—my first year in development work. With each subsequent conference, I gained much knowledge and information concerning the profession of fund-raising. Most of all, I have made some wonderful friends—friends who have become resources of knowledge and experience. In fact, it didn't take me long to recognize—on more than one occasion—the benefit of surrounding myself with those who had been at this work of development for some time.

Through networking with these friends, my knowledge and experience in the development profession has been deepened. Proverbs 27:17 reads, "As iron sharpens iron, a friend sharpens a friend." What a great description of DIAP! Colleagues and friends, sharing a cup of coffee, *sharpening* each other in the profession we share.

At each DIAP conference, I arrive with specific questions concerning development work. I look for friends, knowing they will *sharpen* me with their answers. Between DIAP conferences also, these colleagues have become a resource. I am only a phone call or email message away from wisdom and experience on issues I face in my office and work. I hope in these past few years that I have been able to help *sharpen* a few colleagues as well.



LEROY SOLOMON, formerly dean of institutional development, is now dean of the Doctor of Ministry program of Ashland Theological Seminary in Ashland, Ohio. His DIAP colleagues wish him God's blessings in his new endeavors.

The *sharpening* has come from individuals of like traditions and—not to my surprise—those of very different traditions. We all can be *sharpened* by one another in our work of development. For me, this is one of the greatest blessings of participating in DIAP.

In March 2005, I accepted a new position at Ashland Theological Seminary as dean of the Doctor of Ministry program. Leaving our development profession gives me special reason to share with my former colleagues what I have gained these past ten years as a participant in DIAP. I shall miss the DIAP Steering Committee, the DIAP conferences, the excellent speakers and workshops, and the great hotels and meals (thanks to Mary McMillan), but most of all, I will miss my colleagues and friends—those who have *sharpened* me as a professional in this wonderful work of development. *SDN*

ats STEERING COMMITTEE

of the Development and Institutional Advancement Program

Julie L. Anderson
Development Officer and Director of Annual Fund, Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC

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

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

Howard Freeman
Chief Development Officer, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA

Kathleen Hansen
Vice President for Seminary Relations and Executive Director, Luther Seminary Foundation, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

Gary Hoag
Vice President of Advancement, Denver Seminary, Denver, CO

Daniel Schipp
Vice President for Development, Saint Meinrad School of Theology, St. Meinrad, IN

Scott Sheldon
Chief Development Officer, Hartford Seminary, Hartford, CT

Leroy Solomon, Chair
Dean of Institutional Development, Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, OH

ats

What I have learned about development

by Theodore J. Wardlaw

It is a blessing that my work forever recalls into my presence that wonderfully challenging and sometimes troubling biblical text “Of those to whom much is given, much is also required.” It is one of my greatest pleasures, on a rather frequent basis, to encounter people who have been challenged by that biblical imperative, who have discovered the fruitful relationship between their treasure and their heart. Sometimes I have concluded that the real secret to development work is not this or that clever new strategy, not this or that new formulaic “come-on,” but is instead the simple matter of just showing up—being there—when that light goes off in people’s hearts and minds and they realize that they can make a gift that is nothing short of transformational.

That may be the most important thing I’ve learned in these past two-and-a-half years, as I have been going through the transition from twenty-three years of service in the parish—the last almost twelve in a historic downtown congregation in Atlanta—to an altogether different kind of service, that of seminary leadership in the Presbyterian church.

The second thing I’ve learned about development is that it’s a calling. I haven’t studied this carefully, but I have a working hunch that the most successful development officers in any seminary are going to be people who aren’t just loyal to their institutions but also are people who, in profound and self-evident ways, love the church. Love it from the inside out, blemishes and all, and who see what they do as a calling.

In our development office at Austin Seminary, Tim Kubatzky, our vice president for institutional advancement, is an elder in his church and is married to an elder in his church. Molly Jensen, coordinator of the annual fund, is an elder in her church and, by the way, a confirmation sponsor of my younger daughter last year. Linda Evans, our director of development, sings in her church choir every Sunday morning; Randal Whittington, our communications person, goes with her church on a mission trip to Mexico every summer; and David Evans, our seminary relations person, is an ordained



THEODORE J. WARDLAW is president of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Austin, Texas. He and fellow seminary president Laura S. Mendenhall addressed development officers at the February 2005 DIAP Conference in Fort Worth.

minister who preaches widely throughout our constituency.

All of these folks have a street-level sense of the church that they are forever bringing with them to work. I believe that street-level sense of the church has a huge impact on the way they understand the relationship between the seminary they serve and the church they love. This is why I believe that what they do—what all development officers do—is a calling.

The third thing I’ve learned about development is that the development office is not some distant cul-de-sac that presidents pay a call upon every so often whenever they need money. It’s not a question of the rest of the seminary leadership dreaming up plans and visions and then dispatching the development people as if they are hired guns or bounty hunters, to go out and fund things. No, the development dimension of an institution needs to be deeply and permanently planted within the larger central leadership.

This is not just to foster better communications; it is because it’s entirely possible that every subject that matters in the larger perspective of things has a development dimension. Curriculum, a housing plan, moving the student lounge to create a president’s dining room, inviting this or that lecturer to campus, hosting this or that conference—whatever the topic, I believe there is potentially a development dimension.

Fourth, because development people are not an appendage and need to be involved intimately in the larger matters related to vision and direction, there needs to be a high level of trust and respect between the president and the development staff in general, and the chief development officer in

particular. This requires time and cultivation and, over time, the grace of good chemistry.

A fifth thing I've learned about development is if the institution doesn't have a tightly-designed, carefully, thoughtfully, and even tediously weighed, considered, and measured long-range plan that, at the end of the day, is "owned" by everyone from general staff to the board of trustees, then the task of development will be a far more difficult and haphazard task.

Another way to put it is that, if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there. We have a fifteen-year long-range plan that emerged from a painstaking process designed by a board member who is a brilliant strategist and institutional thinker. Before we had that plan, it was very difficult for me to answer the question "What's your vision for Austin Seminary in the next ten years?"

The first time I had to answer that question, by the way, was in the early months of my being there when Tim Kubatzky and I visited a donor from whom we were hoping to get a gift of between \$1.5 and \$5 million. I made a pitch that I thought was brilliant, and then over the next hour he smoked out every wobbly argument, every sentence that sounded pretty but said nothing, and every metaphor that would look good on a Hallmark card but simply wilted under the scrutiny of this donor. By the end of the hour, he was kind enough to return to me my head on the most attractive silver platter you've ever seen. Essentially, I had failed to answer the simple question: "What's your vision over the next ten years at Austin Seminary?"

That was then and this is now. Now, in the wake of that long-range planning process, I can answer that question in my sleep; and donors, by their generosity, have already demonstrated the difference that makes. If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there. In other words, if there's a vacuum in an institution's sense of direction, all it takes is three endowed chairs that reflect not the *institution's* vision but the *donor's* vision—just three endowed chairs—to change, for better or for worse, the curriculum of the place.

A sixth and final thing: in addition to vision, the work of development takes time. In

Atlanta, while I was there, the church I served went through a multi-million dollar capital campaign to restore the Victorian sanctuary and to do a number of other things. The campaign committee sent me out on some of the big asks and, in that congregation in the mid-1990's, that meant asking for figures like \$150,000 and \$250,000. I'd sometimes have the pleasure of sitting in peoples' living rooms, asking them for \$150,000 and hearing them say "Sure" and excusing themselves to go get their checkbook.

"In addition to vision, the work of development takes time."

The scale in this job is altogether different, and it takes time and patience. In early December of 2003, Tim Kubatzky and I visited with an old friend of the seminary and asked him to consider giving the seminary the money for a distinguished chair. I actually made the ask, and he shook his head and said, "I can't do that." I was tempted simply to say "Okay" and go back to my Caesar salad, but Tim picked it up and asked "Do you mean you can't do it at all, or you can't do it now?" Tim went on to suggest some ways in which the man might think of structuring the gift. The man said, "I'll have to think about it....I'll get back to you."

Weeks, months, and nothing. I kind of forgot about it, actually, until this past December. Tim and I were in the man's community and called on him to wish him a merry Christmas. He sat behind his desk, smiled broadly, and said, "I'm so glad you've come by. I have something to share with you." He told of how he had been reflecting on the request, had been doing some figuring, had been thinking of the one in whose name he wanted to make the gift and how proud that one would be of it, and as a Christmas gift—but more importantly as an act of gratitude to God—he said "I want to give that chair," tears in his eyes.

Twelve months from ask to gift. Patience, patience, patience, and then, by the grace of God, what we did, really, was just show up—just be there—when he lined his treasure up with his heart...which brings me back to my first point: in great measure, development work is as simple as that. SDN

From one generation to the next

by Rebekah Burch Basinger

For more than a decade now, the fund-raising community has been abuzz with talk about the intergenerational transfer of wealth that is under way in Canada and the United States. The value of the resources currently or soon to be in motion is estimated somewhere in the range of \$41 trillion. It is assumed (or at least hoped) that as much as six to seven trillion dollars of the coming bonanza will be directed to charities as outright gifts and/or bequests.

Listening in on conversations among fund-raisers, we might assume a direct link between charities and the soon-to-be-departed donors. In truth, however, there is almost always a middle-person(s) standing between the charity and the potential giver—his or her family—and family members do not always share the philanthropic interests of “our” donor. Despite long years of smooth sailing with that special friend of the school, the weather can change quickly (and often for the worse) when family members come over the horizon.

The following suggestions can help seminary fund-raisers navigate the sometimes choppy waters of family giving and bring that long anticipated ultimate gift safely into port.

Familiarize yourself with what’s happening with today’s families, paying particular attention to trends in family philanthropy.

Almost everything about the way wealthy families give is in play, spurred on by a plethora of new giving vehicles including family foundations, donor-advised funds, giving circles, venture funds, bank-sponsored philanthropic service programs, and the like. At the same time, decision-making, along with the money, is passing between generations. As family members wander afield—both geographically and theologically—donor cultivation becomes an increasing challenge, especially for development staff in small shops.

Your own donors are an excellent source of information about what is happening within the families closest to your institution. Beyond what donors themselves can teach us about



REBEKAH BURCH BASINGER, of Dillsburg, Pennsylvania, is an independent consultant for fund-raising and board development, director of program development of In Trust, Inc., and a member of DIAP’s editorial committee.

the changing dynamics of giving within families, there are excellent print and web resources to which development staff can turn. These include the National Center for Family Philanthropy (www.ncfp.org) and The Gathering (www.gathering.org), both of which, along with providing excellent online resources, distribute print newsletters that are informative and free of charge.

Prepare the development program to respond to trends in family philanthropy.

After assessing which trends most affect donors to your school, take steps to respond creatively to changing family dynamics and information needs. This begins by seeking to build intergenerational confidence in the mission and outcomes of the school, and whenever possible involving whole families in conversations about giving. Remember, within families of faith, giving is linked to the spirit as surely as it is to the pocketbook, so it is crucial that we focus as much on the why as the how of giving, lifting up the spiritual dynamics of families and their money, the impact of giving on children and grandchildren, and the importance of extending to the next generation the joy of Christian stewardship.

Many parents hide their estate plans from adult sons and daughters, and grown children, in turn, are reluctant to raise the subject for fear of appearing overly interested in an inheritance. Add to this the fact that few financial counselors are comfortable with the value aspects of estate planning, and it is no surprise that financial discussions are delayed until a crisis. Seminary development teams do

their donors a great service by creating safe spaces for exploring wishes, values, and hopes for the family legacy—by breaking through the secrecy about money that too often permeates family relationships. When we approach our work with donors and their families as a teaching ministry of the seminary, something quite remarkable is likely to happen—including the possibility of generation-spanning gifts to the school.

Position the seminary as a resource to families who are dealing with money issues.

Development staff, and especially those who work in one- or two-person shops, can feel that providing resources to families is simply beyond the realm of possibility. However, as the following idea list illustrates, not everything a school might do to assist families requires a lot of staff time or extra dollars.

- ♦ When telling stories about major and planned gifts to the school, include comments from adult children and/or other family members describing their feelings about the gift.
- ♦ List resources and tools on the seminary website that can help facilitate family conversations about giving as an extension of their faith. The Alban Institute, for example, provides a wide range of print and video materials, as do many of the denominationally based foundations. There's no need to reinvent the wheel—beg, borrow, and adapt what you can from others.
- ♦ Partner with nearby congregations in providing workshops where whole families can consider estate-planning issues.
- ♦ Offer on-campus seminars that equip pastors and church leaders to help families talk together about money, giving, and faith.

The seminary development world is littered with sad stories of the consequences of failing to reach out to the sons and daughters of longtime donors. True, it is not easy or even always possible to include family members in the planning of a major gift to the seminary, but when we are able to draw a new generation into our conversations with donors, the benefits to both the seminary and the family can be great. As for the development officer, it is an amazing privilege to assist a special friend of the school in extending his or her joy of giving from one generation to the next. *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).

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



A biblical perspective on givers and giving

by Fred Smith Jr.

Over the last twenty years in my role as president of The Gathering, an international association of individuals, families, and foundations giving to Christian ministries around the world, I have had many occasions to talk with people about philanthropy. Two of the most frequent questions, especially from those new to giving, are “What is the biblical way to give?” and “What are the best and most strategic causes to which I should be giving?”

Those are good questions and have been the source of many great discussions; however, while I have always appreciated the sincerity with which they have been asked, I have wrestled with the value of a simplistic answer. In fact, I have always doubted there is such an answer, but I do think there is a biblical way of looking at the issue.

In Ephesians 2:10, Paul writes that we are God’s workmanship (*poema*), created in Christ Jesus to do good works. Not only that, but the good works for which we were created already have been prepared (*peripateo*) for us to do. Literally, we have been created to be visible illustrations of the invisible God in the world through doing good works that fit us.

Those good works are to be so natural that we “wear a path” by walking around in them. We love doing them. The more we do them, the more we like doing them. In other words, our unique design for giving has already been matched by our unique assignment of good works to which we give. Not only do we not have to mimic the style of another’s giving, but also we do not have to feel the pressure of giving to their particular cause. Moreover, just as there is a variety of gifts, there is a variety of models in Scripture for giving.

Like you, I have heard it said that the highest form of giving is anonymity. Giving like the widow’s in Luke 21 is the true biblical model, but if Ephesians 2:10 is right, then that’s not the case. Rather, there is a diversity of giving styles in Scripture—not just one.



FRED SMITH JR., of Tyler Texas, is president of The Fourth Partner Foundation and president of The Gathering. He was a featured presenter at DIAP’s pre-conference workshop in Fort Worth in February.

Consider the following examples. I hope they will be useful not only to those who give, but also to those who are in the work of ministry development.

David

Leaders give leadership gifts. When they give, others follow their example. Not only did David understand the importance of integrity (“I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing”), but also he expected others to sacrifice as well, and they did. He is not shy nor vague about his own personal commitment of gold (three thousand talents) and silver (seven thousand talents), and the effect is all the leaders of families and commanders and officials gave willingly toward the work.

Solomon

I call these the extravagant givers. Everything they do is large and more often than not extraordinary in size and quality. As well, it is rarely (if ever) anonymous or even quiet. People of unusual gifts are often exaggerated in their expression of them. God gave Solomon a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. Men of all nations came to listen to his wisdom and his fame spread to all the surrounding nations, and when he gave? It, too, was part of his fame. He didn’t hide it or shy away from recognition. In fact, just the opposite. He built a temple and a palace that were unlike any others in their splendor.

Elisha

The prophet's response to the plight of the widow was not a gift of money, but the gift of an opportunity to create a short-term and profitable business to support her family. He commanded her to get all her neighbors involved in the venture ("not just a few") by their giving her their empty jars. She then sells the oil to pay her debts and is able to live on what is left. That's innovative and cooperative and we know people like this.

The wise men

Some of us are team givers as they were. We prefer working with others, but we also have a unique contribution. The wise men shared the risk and they stayed together to accomplish their mission. As well, like the widow, they made their gift and released it. There is no account of their calling back to Mary and Joseph a year later to find out how their gifts were being used or to see how Jesus was growing as a result of their gifts. They came, contributed, and departed.

Zaccheus

The "wee little man" is an interesting blend of exuberance and precision. While his life has been changed, his attention to detail has not. He does not say he is going to give it *all* away out of gratitude. Instead, he says he will give half of it—leaving himself the balance. As well, he does not say he will repay ten times but four times. He has a number in mind that does not allow his exhilaration to get out of control. His new generosity has structure—and limits.

The widow

I doubt any of us would have encouraged her to give to that ministry had we known what Jesus knew about the flawed leadership, the

organization's lack of vision, and misuse of money. Yet, instead of being an example of gullible giving, she is an illustration of givers who give and truly release the gift. They have the increasingly rare ability to trust that somehow God will use a flawed institution and still provide for them.

Barnabas

The account of the early church in Acts tells us how members sold possessions and took care of one another. It does not say they sold *all* their possessions. One of them, Barnabas, sold *a* field and brought the money to the apostles. Barnabas did not sell everything over which he had responsibility. More importantly, he had the gift of recognizing and supporting new talent and giving these people the credibility they needed to get started. Two of his "investments," Paul and John Mark, turned out to be remarkable in their "return" for the church.

The above is not an exhaustive list, as there are several other examples of unique styles of giving in Scripture. My only intent here is to offer up different ways of thinking about stewards and donors.

You might ask yourself which of these individuals is most representative of your own style of giving. I hope you do and I hope in doing so you begin to recognize how your giving is a part of God's workmanship. You might, as a development or stewardship professional, ask yourself with what kind of donor you are most effective. With whom do you do your best work and with whom do you struggle? What are some implications for you and for your institution?

Again, this is all part of understanding God's wonderful plan for our design and for His design of the good works for which we were created. SDN

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

*Have you moved?
Is there a new
member of your
development staff
who would like to
receive Seminary
Development
News on an
ongoing basis?*

*Please email 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

Connecting with alums

by Carolyn Cranston

Alums want to feel a part of the institution from which they graduated and they want to feel cared for by that institution. That's a challenge for the alum office, which should generate much of that caring.

Fund-raising can create excitement and enthusiasm among the alums of your seminary! Following are programs that have worked for Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

While it is not possible for the alum director to personally know all of our seminary's 2,800 alums, an attempt is made to contact at least three new people every week via telephone calls, emails, and letters.

Our seminary sends a magazine, the *Panorama*, to all alums three times a year. Alums are able to use it to submit and share news with classmates. Our alums also receive a yearly calendar with special events marked, mailings from the continuing-education office, and other correspondence.

The alum office hosts annual Alumnae/i Days on campus and sponsors various functions around the country for alums. The purpose of these and other programs is to build relationships and to make alums feel connected to the seminary. If we are going to endeavor to raise money for our institution from our alums, relationship foundations must be established.

Our office searched for the right vehicles to reach our alums and generate revenue. An annual phonathon is held in September, and it marks the official start of our annual-fund campaign. Over the years, we have found that using class stewards—"classmates calling classmates"—has been the most effective means of contacting our graduates.

This year marks the beginning of a five-year comprehensive alumnae/i annual fund/capital campaign. We call it "Firm Foundations." For the campaign, we tried to find another way to meet the ambitious monetary goal that was established. We began the planning for a new strategy more than a



CAROLYN CRANSTON is director of alumnae/i and church relations for Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

year in advance. As a result, our usual strategy undertook a new look.

We asked two alums to be co-chairs of the Class-Stewards Steering Committee. Staff and the co-chairs met several times to establish a timeline that was occasionally revamped during the course of the year. The co-chairs then invited four additional alums to assist with the planning process. This group then approached others to develop a fifteen-person Steering Committee, which met with staff to design the final strategy of the five-year campaign and to recruit class stewards for each post-1949 class.

The most productive meeting of the Class-Steward Steering Committee and staff was a brainstorming session. We established an alum goal of \$1 million over a five-year period and a "pledge-a-share" concept was adopted. The theme for the alum portion of the campaign was to be called "Step up for Students." Alum gifts for the annual fund would be used for student scholarships unless otherwise designated.

Further, we generated ideas about the letter from class stewards to classmates— explanation of the campaign, what the seminary offered to alums, what alums could do for their seminary, the seminary's financial request to alums over the next five years, and how alum gifts would be used.

The ideas generated during the brainstorming session were utilized in the development of a brochure for both a promotional piece and phone-call talking points. Class stewards, a group that included all fifteen members of our

Alumnae/i Council, wrote letters to their classmates that were transferred to stationary with the same logo used on the campaign brochure. The letters and brochures were mailed to alums in advance of the phonathon.

The phonathon was promoted in a variety of ways. In addition to the letter and brochure, alums were given the dates of the phonathon on their seminary calendar. For phonathon callers, reminder letters were sent regarding location, date, and time. Enthusiasm and support for the mission of the annual fund was generated in alumnae/i council meetings. Our weekly school news, the *E-Prologue*, invited students, faculty, and staff to join callers for a continental breakfast during the two-week phonathon. We wanted those on campus to see the dedicated work of our alums, and we wanted callers to interact and hear the stories of our students, faculty, and staff. The result was wonderful stories being shared and an increased admiration and understanding among all parties involved.

The day before the start of the phonathon, "Seminary Sunday" was held for all class stewards and phonathon callers. This afforded the callers an opportunity to become reacquainted with their seminary. Attendees heard presentations from administrators, faculty, and students in addition to touring the campus and seeing newly built and renovated facilities.

Phonathon instructions began with the topic of stewardship and how to look at Christian giving as an occasion to experience the fullness of God's grace. We discussed how to appreciate both the large and the small gift, and how all pledges are an expression of faith. Stewardship is recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God, entrusted to us to use in a way that serves and honors our Lord.

From there, we moved on to an explanation of the materials provided for the phonathon, such as news of the seminary (make your seminary shine by pointing out what makes it unique), a phonathon tip sheet, answering-machine message suggestions, recommended

giving levels, and the five different letters that would be sent to alums after phone calls were made. (Each year we select a Scripture passage to be printed on all letters mailed from the office.) We also explained the information listed on the phonathon caller sheets and how to use the sheets appropriately. An instruction session was held daily for those who were unable to attend the larger event.

The brochure became the first talking point as callers began a discussion of the campaign. This was the first year we attempted to solicit a five-year pledge and it was quite successful. Our campaign was based on the idea of 1,000 for \$1,000. We needed 1,000 alums to pledge \$1,000 dollars over a five-year period to reach the goal of \$1 million dollars in five years.

To achieve this goal, we broke the \$1,000 into shares. Some alums were able to pledge far more than one share, some one share, some half a share, and others a quarter or an eighth of a share. This tactic produced an atmosphere of excitement as callers shouted out their success and the total of shares and pledge results were recorded on a daily chart.

A successful phonathon requires not only follow-through, but also follow-up. Letters were sent to everyone who was contacted. Other letters were mailed to those whom callers were unable to reach during the two weeks of calling. For those who made a financial commitment, reminder letters were sent out in December and in April so that gifts would reach us by the end of our fiscal year. In the spring, a mini-phonathon was held for those from whom we had not yet had a response.

Phonathons require advance planning, detailed organization, and an atmosphere of enthusiasm. We have found that our alums—for the most part—welcome a call from a classmate to catch up on the seminary, other classmates, and families. The rewards for the annual fund and the capital campaign certainly have justified the work that is required. *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 CONFERENCE 2006: COMMUNICATING THE VISION

Thursday ~ Saturday, February 16 ~ February 18, 2006

Riverfront Marriott Hotel, Savannah, Georgia

- ◆ Pre-conference workshop for new development officers
Thursday, February 16, 1:30-4:30 p.m.
Led by Tim Kubatzky, Austin Theological Seminary
- ◆ Pre-conference workshop on communications
Thursday, February 16, 1:30-4:30 p.m.
Led by Barbara Chaapel, Princeton Theological Seminary

Sponsored by



The Association of Theological Schools
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

The Development and Institutional Advancement Program (DIAP)