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# THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

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# **Theological Education**

**Ministerial Education in a Religiously  
and Culturally Divided World**

**AUTUMN 1990**

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## **EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION**

**Gail Buchwalter King**

A walk on many of our seminary campuses quickly presents one with a kaleidoscope of races, languages and cultures. Predictions are that by the year 2000, if the church is at all attentive to its potential constituency, all of us will live in a kaleidoscopic world. What does that tell us about our teaching task? Central to the discussion of pluralism is the tension between particularity and universality. Coming from those who feel marginalized are voices claiming a unique clarity of understanding distinct from the majority culture about faith and the world. Those from the prevailing and dominant European tradition while recognizing distinctions are most likely to argue for universality stating that culture, race and language are important but underneath is a driving core of universal truth sustained over time and place. Where does truth lie? What are its boundaries?

These questions served as the backdrop for theological reflection for the Thirty-Seventh Biennial meeting. Addresses centered around the theme “Ministerial Education in a Religiously and Culturally Diverse World.” To lay a framework for the debate Dr. Joseph Hough, Dean, Vanderbilt University Divinity School entitled his address “Theological Education, Pluralism and the Common Good.”

Dean Hough opens with the following observation, “pluralism, understood as the combination of the new gender diversity, age diversity, and ethnic diversity has raised serious questions about the adequacy of traditional education, the demands of the curriculum, and the content of courses.” Pluralism in its broadest context poses strong challenges to the knowledge paradigms which have ordered seminary life for centuries. After describing a number of the challenges, Dean Hough asks the question, “Is any language or human mental construct capable of describing the reality of God in terms that are not culture and time bound? If not, then what does it mean to claim that one description of the reality of God is true in any universal sense?”

Having laid out the problem, Dean Hough goes on to utilize two biblical images that of Babel and Pentecost to describe two possible scenarios--the polarity of particularity and universality--one could use to address the challenges of pluralism. Both images, while descriptively helpful, in the end are inadequate. Setting aside these two images, Dean

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Hough introduces a third image that of “the common good” as a vehicle to embrace pluralism while at the same time having a base for some cohesiveness. For Hough this image calls for the commitment to reshape our relationship to the earth and calls religious institutions to provide a critical and mediating role in defining a just and moral society.

Three able respondents from the identified world of pluralism, David Shannon, Eleanor Scott Meyers and Fumitaka Matsuoka while affirming much of what Dean Hough said pushed listeners further to understand that closing the gap between particularity and universality too soon before sharing the pain of alienation experienced by those marginalized will only exacerbate the problem. At a time when it is so difficult for theological seminaries to attract those who are marginalized to enter theological education and at a time when once recruited, placement is still problematic, caution must be raised about introducing closure too early.

Unique to our experience in Montreal was an address given by Principal Pierre Goldberger, a French Canadian theologian who shared the struggle, pain and hope of many Canadians. Intertwined with the Quebecois concerns were also those of the Native Americans. Do we want to make room for the other--are we willing to shift our fundamental perceptions and values toward “the other”--those different from ourselves?

Because of the oral nature of its delivery, we are unable to print his text but we are grateful for his time with us this past June.

Expanding our kaleidoscopic world even further was the presentation by Sister Marian Bohlen “The Future of Mission in a Pluralistic World.” With gentle grace, Sister Bohlen identified four movements in our world today: nations, religious groups, and political blocs coming together, religious traditions coming together, inevitable conflict between the rich and poor and a deabsolutizing vision where “either/or” becomes “both/and.” The “bias” from which Sister Bohlen stands comes from her years of experience in Indonesia. She takes us on a journey as she releases the bindings of her



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theological baggage that she brought with her to the mission field. Responding with great energy and clarity were Donald Shriver and Andrew MacRae. Both heightened for us once again the issue of particularity and universality. Can North Americans witness to Jesus Christ with conviction and enthusiasm?

Though not related to the theme of the biennial meeting, we present to you two companion pieces, one related to publishing and the other related to faculty development. Barbara Wheeler discusses several decades of history of both secular and religious publishing houses. With frightening realism she shares with us the shift from when publishing houses welcomed books that were “original, intellectually daring, culturally exciting or socially significant, whether such books made a lot of money or not” to the world of publishing houses where the only goal is to turn a fast profit. With equal clarity Wheeler describes the changes and sometimes the demise of religious publishing houses. She closes with a call for our advocacy in hopes that some new turn can be made toward the pursuit of knowledge again.

Jean McLean, consultant, Lilly Endowment, shares with us insights gleaned from Lilly’s Faculty Scholarship Development Program. Through the experiences of 18 schools, the Endowment identified successful strategies for supporting and funding faculty scholarship, and learned what is effective and what is possible. The summaries fall into the areas of planning, faculty scholarship development and financial development.

It is hoped that these thoughtful addresses and responses along with the insightful observations about publishing and faculty development will provide a rich contribution to your own excellent work in theological education.

## **THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, PLURALISM AND THE COMMON GOOD**

**Joseph C. Hough, Jr.**

In 1984, the Association of Theological Schools sponsored a national conversation of institutional leaders to discuss issues in theological education. Following on a series of regional forums in the early 1980s, the convocation was designed to help identify the issues thought to be most basic for theological education for the remainder of the decade and into the 1990s. More than two hundred representatives from all over the United States and Canada met in small groups charged with identifying the most pressing issues for theological education. Literally hundreds of issues were raised, but the one issue given more prominence than any other single matter of concern was the issue of pluralism in theological institutions. Pluralism was not very well defined, but it became clear that the participants included within that Dine rubric any number of important aspects of the diversity represented in the life and curriculum of theological schools.

Beginning at the most obvious level, pluralism refers to the fact that we are theological educators responsible to very different constituencies and representing very different sorts of schools. We are Roman Catholic, we are Protestant. We are liberal, we are evangelical. We are church-related, we are university-related, and we are independent. We are located in Canada and we are located in the United States. That diversity alone creates problems of communication at the level of institutional purposes and planning.

There seemed to be several other kinds of diversity that were of concern to the participants as well:

In the first place, there is a new sociological diversity in almost all of our schools. There are increasing numbers of women, ethnic minority students and international students attending theological schools which were formerly white male enclaves. Their presence raises certain problems and possibilities not previously envisioned. Moreover, the aging of the student population, especially the inclusion of rising numbers of second career persons studying for the ministry has brought a new richness to the life of the schools and rendered traditional class

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scheduling highly problematic. Pluralism, understood as the combination of the new gender diversity, age diversity and ethnic diversity has raised serious questions about the adequacy of traditional theological education, the demands of the curriculum, and the content of particular courses. It is not surprising, then, that many of the participants in Convocation 84 identifying pluralism as a major issue had in mind the uncertainty, conflict and turmoil created by the growing diversity of the student population in theological schools.

A second constellation of issues was also much in evidence in the discussions about pluralism during Convocation 84. Alongside the new sociological diversity, and partly because of it, there have emerged certain methodological and epistemological challenges to the traditional fields of study. For example, because women and minorities have not been very visible in historical studies, there has developed a new emphasis on social history as opposed to the history of ideas. Social historical methodology has become a way of making visible that very large segment of Christians whose beliefs and practices shaped the daily life of the churches.

Moreover, in theological studies, various contextual approaches have arisen to challenge traditional approaches to the verification of truth claims and moral judgments. The philosophical wars between the pragmatists and the foundationalists have spilled over into theological dialogue. Does our thought about God correspond to the reality of God, or do we speak of the truth about God in what Sallie McFague has called “metaphorical” terms or what Richard Rorty has called “ethnocentric” terms. In other words, is any language or human mental construct capable of describing the reality of God in terms that are not culture and time bound? If not, then what does it mean to claim that one’s description of the reality of God is true in any universal sense?

Liberation theologians have challenged traditional Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians for their failure to take seriously the practice of justice as the beginning point for understanding the work of God in the world. They have particularly stressed what the Bishops at Medellin called the “preferential option for the poor,” the theological conviction that God’s redemptive activity in the world is to be identified primarily with the liberation of the poor from the injustice

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of poverty. Black theologians challenged the whole theological enterprise for its failure to begin its thinking with an analysis of racism. God's action in the world can only be discerned in light of such an analysis, for it is the liberation of people from the oppression of racism that defines redemption, both personal and corporate. Feminists have argued that gender analysis reveals the oppressiveness to women of all major paradigms for humanistic thought, including especially theological thinking. What is the impact on the role and status of women of a particular way of construing the nature of God? If it tends to confirm the derivative and subservient position of women, then it must be challenged on the grounds that the perpetuation of such an injustice contradicts any notion of God's universal redemptive and liberating intent. Asian theologians insist that theological thinking must begin with an analysis of culture. What is common to all of these important hermeneutical challenges to our traditional ways of doing theology is the insistence that context is the beginning point for theological thinking. The bifurcation between theory and practice is overcome. The truth of theological statements will now be measured in terms of their power to enable persons in their own particular context to live the promise of redemption through a liberating practice.

Similar questions arise for theological reflection about the relationship of Christianity to the other great living religious traditions. As innovations in communication and transportation have negated the distances that separated the spheres dominated by the world's great religions, the theological questions about the relative value of religious truth claims is raised anew. Large scale migrations placing actual congregations of worshipers from the great religious traditions in close proximity to each other make the issue of religious pluralism both urgent and practical. The responses to this situation continue to be extremely diverse. They range from an exclusivist posture that denies any Christian theological significance to other religions at all to what Troeltsch called a "wretched historicism," a radical and thoroughgoing relativism that undermines the commitment of the faithful and eschews any attempt to establish criteria for choosing better or worse with respect to either method or content in the study of religions. Where one

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stands in this range of options can decisively shape her or his answers to the important theological issues such as revelation, incarnation, the authority of the scriptures and the nature of the church. Therefore, it will also significantly affect the practices of worship, education, evangelism and mission and spiritual formation. In light of this, what is at stake in the discussion of theology and religious pluralism is the nature and purpose of theological education as well.

In all of these matters that have to do with methodology, epistemology and hermeneutics, pluralism seems simply to mean that we are existing in the time when there are emerging some strong challenges to the knowledge paradigms that have governed our research and discourse since the eighteenth century. What we are experiencing is what Stephen Toulmin has described as a transition time when an established pattern of knowing still is dominant but is being challenged on a variety of fronts. While it may be that we are at the point where a new paradigm of knowledge is being born, it is not at all clear just what that paradigm will be. It is not even clear that it is possible for there to be a single, all embracing paradigm for the verification of truth claims at all. During such times of uncertainty and expectancy, there is considerable intellectual conflict in the theological schools.

With all of this diversity, both its richness and its confusion, is it possible to speak of a common task for theological education in North America? If we are to envision some unity in our disunity there are two sorts of responses that we must avoid. Utilizing imagery from the scriptures, I shall call one of these responses the response of Babel. The other I shall label the response of Pentecost.

Babel, symbolizes the disintegration of communication the complete separation of one from the other by the confusion of language. At Babel, the problem was not simply one of differing hermeneutical approaches, nor was the issue the relative validity of truth claims. It was the total inability to communicate at all that confounded the great architectural venture. The same ones who just moments earlier had been easily communicating in the same language as they worked together on a tower to heaven no longer could understand what they heard. There was only confusion and discord. The work ceased, the venture failed and they were scattered to the far corners of the earth. They fled into

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tribalism, to enmity and they suffered total confusion. Babel as an image for theological education signifies the failure of communication and absence of any common sense of purpose.

Babel is always a danger in a time of transition, particularly in a culture of individualism. When the conflict reaches a level of high intensity, discourse is not easy. We cannot even assume, at times, that there is any basis for discourse at all. It is then a temptation to adopt a sort of uneasy tolerance for differences and simply turn to one's own work, eschewing any attempt at mutual understanding. If we yield to that temptation theological schools will finally become congeries of individual teachers, scholars and students, each attending to his or her own agenda. This would portend the loss of any possibility for our schools becoming genuine learning communities. It would also undermine any possibility for the theological schools of this Association to become a broader community of communities with any sense of a common task. At some level, we must communicate. The legitimate differences we have cannot become the bases for ideological isolation.

Pentecost is the biblical answer to the tragedy of human hubris represented by Babel. On that fateful day, people who spoke many languages and who came from many different places sat together to listen to the words of the Galileans. In a sense the crowd gathered at Pentecost represented the builders of Babel after the confusion of tongues. They had no hope for understanding the peculiar language of the preachers. The speech of the Galileans was certainly no *lingua franca*. In spite of that, they heard a word of truth in their own language and many of them left that place transformed. Curiosity was transformed into conviction by a linguistic miracle. The word was being spoken in only one language, yet they all heard it in their own language. For that moment the human situation was transported back into the past, to a simpler time when all spoke the same language and engaged in building a great tower.

Pentecost represents the restoration of the unity that existed prior to the collapse of community discourse. But Pentecost was not literally the restoration of history. It was an eschatological intrusion into time.

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It was a glimpse of the future of hope. Pentecost was an event in which unity was imposed on disunity by divine power. As such it signifies the promise and the possibility of human unity—but even then only for a moment in time. In a short while the ones who had heard the same word on that day in their own languages had gone their way, and the faithful who were the heirs of Pentecost were soon speaking different words in different languages and dividing themselves into contending parties, even in their own small communities. “Some say they are of Paul. Some say they are of Christ. Is Christ divided?” As a matter of fact, Christ was divided, almost always and everywhere. Pentecost always seems to fade toward Babel, but Babel seems always to engender visions of Pentecost. When there is no unity, one is tempted to posit unity and to deny the reality of conflict.

For most of us here, the image of Pentecost is much more seductive than Babel. At these biennial meetings I have heard repeated calls to return to a simpler time, to revert to a common theological language and have done with all of the confusion. After all, who can be against unity? But Pentecost is an equally inappropriate image for our situation, because it represents the refusal to acknowledge the reality of pluralism. It represents the human temptation to exercise power to achieve conformity. As such, it, too, represents the failure of communication, a failure based on a false assumption about the terms of the new conversation. We cannot behave as if our mutual challenges to each other simply invite a facile attitude of toleration. The parties to our discourse are committed persons whose theological positions are grounded in a passion for human redemption and justice. We cannot dismiss genuine conflicts as simply correctives to the “main stream” of theological thinking, all the while assuming that things will eventually go on as usual. We live in a post-Pentecost world.

If neither Babel nor Pentecost can function as appropriate symbols for our response to the reality of pluralism, is there a way of affirming our unity in a common task without denying the genuine pluralism that characterizes our present situation?

I believe that the traditional notion of the common good provides us just such a possibility. Therefore, in conclusion I shall argue that we

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should conceive of the goal of theological education as service to the common good, but that our contemporary pluralistic situation requires our rethinking precisely what service to the common good means.

At the outset, I shall engage in what David Tracy has called an exercise in hermeneutical retrieval, that is, the recovery of a past tradition and the appropriation of that tradition for our current practice. In the process, the tradition is significantly modified by its being related to a new context for practice, but at the same time, current practice is called in to account by the power of the tradition. With this in mind, I shall begin with an analysis of the notion of the common good and show how that notion can provide us with a unifying image for theological education that also allows us to give serious attention to our pluralistic situation.

What was the common good? It was Thomas Aquinas who resurrected this Aristotelian idea and gave to it a distinctly Christian shape. Since all things not only had a natural end, but a supernatural end, any notion of the common good of all things likewise had two aspects, the natural and the supernatural. It was the supernatural good which was the highest good, and for Thomas, the supernatural common good was the proper relation of the whole cosmos to God.

But the supernatural good did not stand isolated from the natural common good. On the contrary, the proper ordering of the whole cosmos to God required the proper ordering of nature to its appointed good as well. With respect to the human community, the highest natural good was happiness or living well.

It is beyond my interests here to develop fully the content of living well, but in general, the good life, for Aristotle and for Thomas, was the virtuous life, and the highest virtues were the intellectual virtues. The good life, therefore, was the life lived according to reason, and the moral life consisted in living according to the moral virtues that are achieved by the ordering of the will according to reason.

Furthermore, Aristotle's notion of living well rests on the anthropological assumption that human beings are social beings. To be fully human, each person requires interaction with other persons, and the fundamental human interaction is discourse. However, the sort of



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discourse Aristotle had in mind was not just idle chatter. It was the process of opening oneself up to the other and receiving from the other such openness. It was mutual speech or, in Thomas' terms, "sounds charged with intentionality," the sort of discourse that made community a possibility and a reality. Such discourse was essential for the pursuit of virtue as well. No person could become virtuous in the absence of conversation with other virtuous persons. Conversation, then, was not only the foundation for human community, it was the essential ingredient for living the good life as well.

In light of this understanding of humanity, we can say that the common good for humanity, was relational. It consisted of those activities that promote friendship between human beings united in a common pursuit of virtue.

For Aristotle, it was obvious that human friendship could not flourish except under certain social conditions. Thus, the common good was not only a personal ideal. It was a political one as well. The sort of communication that made the pursuit of virtue possible could not be sustained except in the context of the city. It could not even be sustained in the city if there was serious poverty, or injustice or intense conflict. The good life, then, was life lived in a city that was characterized by a durable and just order that embraced diversity and yet maintained peace.

All of Aristotle's reflections on the natural common good of human beings were adopted by Thomas Aquinas, but as I indicated earlier, he added to the structure of the common good a supernatural dimension. Therefore, the ruler of the city could not do anything which could endanger the supernatural good of any single individual. Life in the city was conceived in the context of a larger vision of society created by God to promote human salvation, for human salvation was part of God's creative and redemptive ordering of the whole cosmos to God's own self.

In summary, then, the idea of the common good has both an internal and an external referent. The internal common good of individuals as well as groups and social institutions consisted in the promotion of the sort of communication that would lead to the life of virtue. For Thomas that meant the promotion of true piety as well. The external common good

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of each person and each group was the promotion of the good of the whole, that is the proper ordering of the city with justice, peace and prosperity, and the whole cosmos to God.

What does all of this have to say about theological education? To answer that question, it is important to note that for the medieval church, theological education was identical to university education. The medieval university professors clearly saw themselves as religious figures whose learning and teaching were in the service of true piety, the quintessential supernatural common good. The professors, like the university, had a distinctive responsibility for all classical and professional learning, but they were all clerics, and it was clear that as teachers or masters in the university their primary loyalty was to the church. In most of the medieval universities theology was the highest pinnacle of university study. Even those who studied and taught in universities, such as Bologna and Salerno that were developed to serve the other learned professions, were schooled in theology as **well**.

Since university education was essentially theological, then, some reflection on the university and the common good will yield preliminary indications of Thomas' formal criteria of the common good for theological education as well.

As far as I know, Thomas never wrote specifically about the university as such and the common good. Had he done so, he most certainly would have argued that the university, like other subsidiary social groups and institutions, had an obligation to promote the common good. As the institution charged with the promotion of learning, the chief end of the medieval universities would be the formation and nurture of Christian piety in the students in such a way that they could give leadership to the church and all other institutions in service of the highest common good, the creation and maintenance of a social order in which true virtue and Christian piety were inspired and supported.

This would be accomplished by active and continuing communication among the students and faculty, the very activity on which rested the possibility of both the natural and supernatural common good for humanity in general. All of this constituted the internal pursuit of the common good in the university.

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But, like other major institutions, the medieval university was perceived to have an important direct role to play in promoting the common good of the whole social order. As early as the thirteenth century, thinkers like Alexander of Roes and Pope Gregory IX were arguing that the university was one of the three essential “pillars” of Christian civilization. Alexander thought that a Christian society required the “preservation of centers of relative autonomy in order to secure Christian civilization against aberrations in the name of piety or patriotism.” In other words, the university was to be the prophetic arm of a comprehensive Christian civilization.

About three centuries later at Geneva, Calvin modified this conception of the organization of society according to the three offices of Christ. The state exercised the kingly office; the church the priestly office; and the university the prophetic office. In Calvin’s conception of a Christian social order, the university remained essential for the good of the whole. It retained its critical function in the early years of Calvinistic Protestantism. It was a mediating institution, counter-balancing the claims of the pretensions of the church and the state.

Since university education was theological education, we can now say at least three things about the contribution of theological education to the idea of the common good as it was understood in the medieval and early Protestant Christian tradition.

1. Theological education supported the common good by encouraging and sustaining the sort of discourse that could lead to virtue, to piety, and to salvation. That discourse would be characterized by mutuality, openness and serious intent.

2. Theological education supported the common good by educating leaders committed to the development of a Christian civilization. This would include a commitment not only to the natural goods of justice, peace and prosperity, but also the “separated” or supernatural good of true piety and human salvation.

3. Theological educators served the common good by exercising a critical and mediating role in the public discourse with representatives of other institutions about the nature and purpose of a Christian society.

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It is immediately obvious that the material content of these three propositions about theological education is simply not fitting for our understanding of theological education and the common good in our present pluralistic setting. It is based on an anthropology to which there is no longer universal assent. Moreover, the notion of a comprehensive world Christian civilization no longer carries any power or meaning, even for the majority of Christians, because for at least three and a half centuries we have not been able to assume any unified Christian theological perspective.

Yet there are elements of this conceptual retrieval that offer us a glimpse of the things we can affirm in common. The concern for justice and peace, so much a part of the common good of the city, is certainly one we all share. In fact, the new contextual theologies have been born out of that concern, and most other religious thinkers are taking increasingly active roles in the struggle for justice as the worldly context for theological thinking.

Moreover, a proper ordering of the cosmos to God, in Thomas' terms, surely translates into the common concern we all share to reshape our relationship to the earth and to each other for the sake of the future of humankind and the future of the rest of the natural world. In other words, most of us would surely Afghan whether we utilize the term salvation or liberation that part of our task in theological education is to attend to those matters which are essential to the redemption of human and natural history.

Second all of us share the commitment of our forbearers to educate competent leadership for the major social institutions of our society. Education of leaders for religious institutions is the primary justification for the existence of theological schools. As Christians we are bound in a partnership with churches to see that there are leaders of worshipping communities who can insure that the word of the gospel, the word of mercy, hope, forgiveness and love, continues to be heard and lived in the land. In other words we work to educate a generation of leaders who will be capable of assisting the Christian communities to reflect and act with integrity in a complex and troubled world.

Third, no matter how much we differ on specific issues, we encourage our faculty and our students to be active participants in the

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discussion about what constitutes a just and moral social order, avoiding the excesses of nationalism and tribalism and any temptation to claim special privileged knowledge based on our particular piety.

And finally, though there is nothing approaching a consensus on the normative power of Aristotelian rationality with its foundational approach to the quest for truth, there is still a commitment to rational discourse as the basis for the pursuit of truth. Here Richard Rorty's essay on "Science as Solidarity" is especially helpful. Rorty identified two kinds of rationality. One, is the traditional understanding of rationality which is to be methodical, to have criteria for thinking laid down in advance. But, says Rorty, there is another sort of rationality. It is the use of the word to denote that which seems to be reasonable or sane or persuasive to those persons who take argument seriously. This sort of rationality "names a set of moral virtues: tolerance, respect for the opinions of those around one, willingness to listen, reliance on persuasion rather than force. These are the virtues which members of a civilized society must possess if the society is to endure."

In a pluralistic situation it is not possible to define goals and criteria in advance. It is only possible to commit oneself to be a participant in the community of serious discourse about those things that really matter to human beings in the world. If we have in mind this alternative understanding of rationality, we can share the commitment of Thomas and of Aristotle to rational discourse. The commitment to share "sounds charged with intentionality" is the essence of good teaching, the necessary condition for faculty collegiality and the precondition for any fruitful dialogue with our colleges representing other religious perspectives, both Christian and non-Christian. And that sharing must be done in friendship a human relationship that is more than just the toleration of the presence of the other. It is the willingness not only to offer to other human beings what is important to us but also the openness to be genuinely affected by what is offered to us in return. In other words, it is the commitment to rational discourse as the basis for community of learning, virtue and piety. That, it seems to me, ought to be the aspiration of any theological school.

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The hermeneutical retrieval is finished. I can now propose that even as we struggle with the things that divide us we can affirm some things on which we have some significant agreement. This is not to urge unanimity, nor is it to presume uniformity. Rather it is the much more modest suggestion that in this age of pluralism, we theological educators and our institutions share in principle a strong commitment to serve the common good, that proper ordering of the whole cosmos to the life and action of God. That in itself is sufficient to inspire us to pursue with vigor and genuine friendship our conversation about the material content of that common good we hope to share.

Third, no matter how much we differ on specific issues, we encourage our faculty and our students to be active participants in the discussion about what constitutes a just and moral social order.

The hermeneutical retrieval is finished. I can now propose that even as we struggle with the things that divide us we can affirm some things on which we have some significant agreement. This is not to urge unanimity, nor is it to presume uniformity. Rather it is the much more modest suggestion that in this age of pluralism, we theological educators and our institutions share in principle a strong commitment to serve the common good, that proper ordering of the whole cosmos to the life and action of God. That in itself is sufficient to inspire us to pursue with vigor and genuine friendship our conversation about the material content of that common good we hope to share.

## RESPONSE TO THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, PLURALISM AND THE COMMON GOOD

**David T. Shannon**

First, I want to give a word of appreciation to Dr. Joseph C. Hough, Jr. for his thoughtful, descriptive, analytical and sympathetic treatment of “Theological Education, Pluralism and the Common Good.”

Hough affirms that pluralism is a fact of our times. Also, he identifies the different kinds of pluralism and diversity:

- (a) Theological Orientation
- (b) National Sociological Diversity, e.g., gender, age, ethnic and cultural
- (c) Methodological and Epistemological Adversity; emphasis upon context approach to truth, claims and moral judgment, e.g., liberation, feminist, cultural
- (d) Religious Diversity

In analyzing these different forms of pluralism, he focuses upon the ways in which these diversities affect how we do theological education. Hough’s paper echoes the ideas of Arleon L. Kelley in his paper, “Perspectives on Dynamics Effecting the Church in New York.” He states: “We are living in an era of transition from an industrial, Western dominance and hierarchical design to an information, interactive, interdependent and more than egalitarian paradigm to emphasis upon context as approach to truth claims and moral judgement, e.g., liberation, feminist culture and religious diversity” (Kelley, 1990).

The major portion of Hough’s paper is a significant proposal to move beyond the easy responses to the difficult questions raised by pluralism in theological education. First, he identifies two types of response to pluralism by utilizing the biblical accounts of Babel (Genesis 11:1-26) and Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47). He points out that one can readily reject Babel because that problem is the total inability to communicate at all. Therefore, many turn to the image of Pentecost. However, he points out the image of Pentecost although seductive, is not an appropriate image for our time. He argues, “We cannot behave as if our mutual challenges to each other are simply a facile attitude of toleration.”

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Thus, Hough proposes that we examine the notion of the COMMON GOOD as treated by Thomas Aquinas as a way of dealing with pluralism. He proposes that we focus upon what service for common good means.

Hough calls to our attention David Tracy's notion of "hermeneutical retrieval," the recovery of a past tradition and the appropriation of that tradition for our current practice. Hough finds this tradition in Thomas Aquinas' resurrection of the Aristotelian notion of the common good from a Christian perspective.

Hough's utilization of this model emphasizes the centrality of God and the coherence of individuals and groups and social institutions in the commitment to the life of virtue. He focuses upon telos--the goal of affirming the utilitarian outcome of diversity rather than absorption with differences between the diverse elements.

Therefore Hough argues that such hermeneutical retrieval can affirm the concern for justice and peace and addresses the contextual theologies that have emerged out of this concern. Hough concludes by presenting three areas of concern for theological education:

- proper ordering of cosmos to God
- open discourse
- competent leadership for religious institutions

His summary presents the crossing point between Aquinas' time and our life today. In summary, then,

the idea of the common good has both an internal and an external referent. The internal common good of individuals as well as groups and social institutions consisted in the promotion of the sort of communication that would lead to the life of virtue. For Thomas that meant the promotion of true piety as well. The external common good of each person and each group was the promotion of the good of the whole; that is, the proper ordering of the city with justice, peace and prosperity, and the whole cosmos to God.



## Shannon

### Reflections

This paper is a significant contribution to the discussion of “Theological Education and Pluralism.” The notion of the common good is a valuable approach to overcoming the imperialism of former approaches to theological education. However, I have several questions to raise.

1. How does the notion of serving the common good enable the participants to reach each other at their deepest level of human existence? How does this notion enable each person to deal with the values, myths and symbols in a reconciling manner rather than a condemnatory fashion?
2. How do we deal with each other’s historical societal position in terms of nation, race, gender and religion which tends to give special privilege to some and oppression to others?
3. How do we arrive at an accurate historical understanding of each other’s faith commitment as a basis for contributing to the common good?

What really happened in the development of our faith?

In parting of ways which road was taken?

Should different roads be taken today?

4. How do we develop a consistent and authentic theology of pluralism? Does the notion of the common good provide an adequate framework for those who come from different horizons?

As I reflect upon Hough’s paper, I think of another biblical image, Koinonia, the community of sharing in the Good News of the Gospel. I see Hough’s call for theological education in this time of pluralism as a move from Babel through Pentecost to Koinonia.

## RESPONSE TO THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND THE COMMON GOOD

**Eleanor Scott Meyers**

Dean Hough, you put me to work--as your work frequently does. You have a habit of challenging us, your colleagues within theological education, to think hard. It doesn't mean we will always agree with you, but you do draw us into some important dialogues about institutional goals and practices--key questions about the conditions necessary for identifying and carrying out the mission of theological education.

Today's address is no exception. Your descriptions of diversity we recognize all too well. The question about the "common good" in the light of such growing diversity is a concern that lies at the core of culture and intellectual life--indeed it concerns the fundamental basis of all economic, social, and political institutions including our own.

My first thought is Yes the "common good" is something we need--for guided by the Word of the Gospel we have been called to value and seek it. But today in light of the diversity you describe and we attempt to live, the question about the common good is one we must examine critically. We must take care to understand what we mean by the term, but also what we intend by our use of the term. In a time of expanding diversity, the term can be problematic. Historically our sense of it has been defined by a rather narrow group of patriarchs and in practice it has a "mixed" history, having been used for both good and for ill. My concern regarding the concept therefore develops out of my concern for the development of the material content--the practices out of which the content will arise and those practices that might be "ordained" through appeals to its use.

The fact is that it was easier for Aristotle and Thomas--as it is for us today -- to define the common good amid a non-diverse crowd.<sup>1</sup> Today as our Christian traditions are increasingly disestablished from the centers of social, economic, political, and cultural life -- including a new diversity of religions -- I think it is more difficult and more dangerous for us to work on the definition in our isolated settings. We have genuine and legitimate concerns about diversity: we affirm it, even seek it, but when we try to live in it and with it, we are frequently dismayed by our growing lack of hegemonic power--the power we are used to having when it

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comes to defining our institutions and basic social values, the qualities that constitute moral behavior for all of life. Definitions are political and social institutions caught in a time of declining power can be politically dangerous.

I want to suggest that in a couple of ways I am troubled by the presuppositions behind your claim for the importance of the concept of the “common good” at this time in history. I find them premature. By this I mean that the analysis is off just enough that we may not find it practically useful to us as we decide how to proceed with our institutional tasks which is your goal. I want to make two brief comments which are importantly connected.

First, you say that the bifurcation between theory and practice is overcome. My experience is that faculties within theological education are still primarily caught in the isolation between disciplines--and that the most serious separation continues to be found between the so-called “classical” disciplines and the second-class status conferred on the disciplines around the “practice” of ministry: homiletics, ritual leadership, education, and/or sociology, for instance. Much of this is related to the fact that we were trained in educational arenas that maintained the classical isolation, and in institutions committed to the secular academy instead of to the church or the people of God. I would not want to be seen as advocating that we commit ourselves to the church bureaucracies either for I think that carries a different but also debilitating outcome.<sup>2</sup>

The point here is that we haven’t successfully overcome this separation between theory and practice within the curriculum of theological education and that this cuts into our ability to exercise the “mutual speech”--the discourse that makes a learning community possible. We may “talk the talk” as they say in the black church, about the fact that context is the beginning point for theological thinking, but we have failed to “walk the walk” that makes this a reality within our educational settings.

Secondly, I am concerned by the tone of your discussion about a new paradigm of knowledge for the verification of truth claims. Now you did not actually say we are there yet, but you strongly suggest that there is movement in this direction. The pluralism you identify is present enough to cause

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intellectual conflict. True enough, we recognize this: “business as usual” within our institutions has been disturbed. However, when we look at the statistics (the facts about who continues to hold economic, political, and social power in North America today) we are forced to acknowledge that in fact white folks, and especially white males, are very much in charge. And there is little movement: there is no indication of an epistemological break operating within the context of institutional power.

Just look around you in this room and you can without much difficulty assess the status of institutional power within theological education. And we are not atypical. The gender and racial mix in this room would not look very different if we represented higher education in general, political structures in our countries, or institutionalized religion for that matter. Our political, economic, educational, and religious institutions are still dominated by a not very diverse group of white males. This fact constitutes a practical and moral problem to the development of “mutual speech” needed to define the common good.

I still believe that Marx helps us to see into and through our methodological, epistemological and hermeneutic debate in a helpful way when he suggests that the ruling ideas are the ideas of those who rule. Conflict? Yes; important conflict. The sharing of the leadership to define “reality?” Not yet. Those of us who are white do not easily accede to the leadership of others -- intellectual or institutional. And many men still struggle with the leadership offered by women.

We acknowledge that multiple voices must be present in the dialogue to define the “common good.” In fact we know, as Dean Hough said, we can not define it without the diversity. Yet we do not in our practices yield our place nor our voice easily. As W.E.B. Du Bois wrote “. . . today I see more clearly than yesterday that back of the problem of race lies a greater problem which both obscures and implements it: and that is the fact that so many civilized persons are willing to live in comfort even if the price of this is poverty, ignorance, and disease of the majority.”<sup>3</sup>

Is the “common good” a usable word in our moral vocabulary given the structures of poverty, ignorance, and disease in the world today? Is it a

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usable word in the vocabulary of the aims and goals of theological education? I think we do not have in place the institutional setting to support the practice required to explore the definition. The traditions that have carried the defining notion of the common good were and are not today inclusive of those that have shaped and are shaping anew the North American culture. The phrase by Thomas Aquinas, “sounds charged with intentionality,” comes closer only if those of us in this room envision the “sounds” in the mouths of others instead of ourselves.

Beverly Harrison suggests that it takes objectivity to realize what the common good is.<sup>4</sup> She claims that objectivity is possible, but only when all people are able to state what life is like for them. I think this helps to set the stage for a task of theological education: one goal must be to organize arenas for this type of contribution -- the development of settings where folks can state what life is like for them, that we might better be equipped to understand the nature of the church and its ministry and therefore the requirements of theological education.

Dean Hough’s question about the common good is both a useful and a dangerous one. Without the diversity of authentic persons with access to the space to speak and those of us to listen while they tell us about what life is like for them, we delude ourselves that we can be guided by a “common” notion. But without a commitment to seek the “common good” we within theological education will miss a critical part of our mission to become a partial embodiment of the fuller human good.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>. For an excellent discussion by a medieval author of the faulty definitions by the philosophical patriarchs, see Christine de Pizan’s The Book of the City of Ladies. Earl Jeffrey Richards (trans.) New York: Persea Books (1982).

<sup>2</sup>. See Cornel West “The Crisis in Theological Education,” pp. 273-280 in his Prophetic Fragments. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company (1988).

<sup>3</sup>. W.E.B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk. New York; Avon Books (1965).

<sup>4</sup>. Beverly Wildung Harrison, Making the Connections. Carol Robb (ed). Boston: Beacon Press (1985). See especially pp. 235-263.

## RESPONSE TO “THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, PLURALISM AND THE COMMON GOOD”

FUMITAKA MATSUOKA

### *PLURALISM: Its Spiritual Pain*

A strength of Dean Hough’s presentation is an acknowledgement of the complex nature of pluralism. The methodological and epistemological challenges of pluralism point to the painful reality of a pluralistic world. Perhaps the most painful is what President Donald Shriver, Jr. of Union Seminary calls the “spiritual pain” of pluralism. The pain is that “no one . . . is on the verge of providing a single, convincing, institution-revolutionizing **idea** of comprehensive human community.”<sup>1</sup> The reason for this failure is that any claim for a “universal” is suspect today because all such claims supply us with “enough historical embarrassments to [their own theories] to make us suspicious of the [theories themselves.]”<sup>2</sup> **“Only those who have felt this pain will be useful in the discerning of some promise in that pain.”**<sup>3</sup>

An acknowledgment of such a “spiritual pain” is a necessary task of theological education in a pluralistic world. However, here lies a real challenge for those of us who are engaged in theological education. The challenge is that it is so difficult to acknowledge such a “spiritual pain of pluralism” because:

1. To acknowledge the pain means also to acknowledge the very limit of the worldview, paradigm, or way of ordering life in which we have placed our confidence. We are not really willing to give up our security-blanket so easily and willingly.
2. Any sign of promise in the midst of the pain of pluralism comes **disjunctively** rather than in an evolutionary fashion. An acknowledgement of the pain of pluralism is really a **conversion**. A conversion does not come so readily.

Dean Hough’s comment that “. . . there are emerging some strong challenges to the knowledge paradigms that have governed our research and discourse since the eighteenth century” is an apt comment in this regard.

However, the radical nature of pluralism and what it implies for theological education does not seem to be adequately reflected in his presentation.

### *Babel and Pentecost?*

Life in a pluralistic world calls for theological discernment for such a world is a world without maps. It is a life in the **Holy Insecurity**.

The principles of pluralism are inductive. That is, they must emerge as life itself proceeds. Any discourse, act of decision-making, or a way of relating with others in a world of pluralism must be free, free to discover what we did not know ahead of time, free to devise the ordering of its agenda, free to move beyond what we thought would be the marks of the integrity of our inquiry.

Therefore, an appropriate story for theological education in a pluralistic world is really the Wilderness story rather than that of Babel. Whereas Babel is an accurate depiction of the actual human conditions--the failure of communication and an absence of any common sense of purpose--the wilderness experience pushes us to claim promise in the midst of pain. The life in a wilderness is a life in which much that we have regarded as sure and certain will undergo radical testing and radical reformulation.

Pentecost, on the other hand, acknowledges the promise. In a sense, the story is “a divine shortcut to the Berlitz school.” What is symbolized here is “theological geography.” Histories that have been either ignored or derided are now respected, probed, and above all used in constructive efforts to understand anew, and more deeply the gospel that is at the heart of the being of all the churches. It does signify “the promise and the possibility of human unity” (Hough) or the promise of reconciled diversity of people.

### *Goals of Theological Education in A Pluralistic World*

Life in a pluralistic world is, therefore, life that embraces the “Holy Insecurity”. It calls for honesty about ourselves. It calls for courage to be guided by the promise of a reconciled world in the midst of an uncharted

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course of diversity. Above all, it calls for a certain kind of commitment. For life in a pluralistic world is not an obvious fact. It is a **decision one must make**. It is a very specific, self-conscious reading of social reality. Theological education calls for such decision-making.

1. A goal of theological education is not so much an “exercise in hermeneutical retrieval” of the common good as to live amidst the radical questions including the possibilities of asking and hearing the questions before ordering ways of answering them. In this sense, I affirm Hough’s notion of “open discourse--the willingness not only to offer to other human beings what is important to us but also the openness to be genuinely affected by what is offered to us in open discourse.”

But words of caution are in order here. Only those who feel the pain of their own particularities in a pluralistic world are the ones who will have courage to enter into the realm of the “Holy Insecurity” and are able to listen to other voices. What is at stake here is: listening in order to **relate** rather than listening in order to conquer.

2. Theological education in a pluralistic world, then, has more to do with what Barth calls “**Basic Form of Humanity**” rather than the Common Good. Put within his elaboration of Buber’s “I-Thou” principle, Barth talks about speaking to each other and hearing each other. Furthermore, this basic form of humanity “stands under the sign that it happens, from both sides **gladly**.” This is to say that theological education in a pluralistic world at least challenges us more toward a goal of breaking down the wall of hostility among us who are increasingly becoming aware of our differences. Theological education should challenge us to speak and hear each other gladly.

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>. Donald W. Shriver, Jr. in “The Pain and Promise of Pluralism,” The Christian Century, March 26, 1980.

<sup>2</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>. Ibid.



## THE FUTURE OF MISSION IN A PLURALISTIC WORLD

MARIAN BOHEN

We stand today at a crossroads, and the choice is not whether to turn to the right or to the left; the choice is whether to turn around and return to the security of the well-travelled, familiar road, or to go on to an unknown, uncharted road. We can turn back or remain idling at the crossroads with our familiar idea of mission from a position of enlightenment and power benevolently going out to the needy and ignorant other; or we can move on to the road of mission as reciprocity, placing ourselves among the powerless, and journeying with them along this new road. If we remain within the safety of our cars, even on this new road, speeding past the trudging pedestrians, we will not open ourselves to the possibility of community, of the shared journey, the shared hardships of the new road. This image of a walk along a new road is for me an image of our mission (sent without power to walk with others) in a world which we are seeing more clearly as a pluriform world. In speaking of the future of mission, I will begin by focusing on what I see as some significant movements leading us toward this new road. I will then retrace the steps in my own mission journey which have led me to this new road. Finally, I will note some of the issues raised by our being at this crossroads, faced with this choice.

If I were to focus on significant currents of change in our world, I would choose the following as particularly important for the future of mission:

- 1) a growing awareness of our place within a global context;
- 2) a sharpened sense of the variety of religious traditions, as we come into closer contact with those of other faiths;
- 3) an increasing moral discomfort with the inequalities and injustices we are beginning to see as never before;
- 4) a hesitant, but insistent, questioning of what we once held as absolute visions and values.

It is certainly obvious to any careful observer that we are in a world in which profound changes are taking place. One such change is the movement from a world in which relatively separate entities - nations, religious groups, political blocs - are coming into closer contact with one another. We are growing in an awareness of living in a global village, on one

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planet, and our churches are moving warily toward what Karl Rahner referred to as a world church. The photographs of our planet, taken from outer space, symbolize this new vision of earth and earthlings. Reactions to this movement toward global consciousness and a community of humankind, are varied and often violent: racial and religious tensions, efforts on the part of minority groups, and of those who rightly perceive that within a global context, they are minorities. All are struggling for a space on this planet to be themselves, to preserve their identity. There is a very real tension within our world today: a growing awareness that we are one, and a fear of losing our particularity if we follow the current carrying us toward unity. I believe this tension is so painful, because we have no models for real community on a global scale. We have many power models: monarchies, totalitarian regimes, democracies (which are, arguably, governed by those with sufficient funds to pay for media exposure), - in all of which a certain uniformity and conformity are demanded for the sake of security or peace. We have not been able to deal well with differences, fearing them as threatening and divisive. We have, as yet, no models, no symbols for this world of planetary awareness and earthling community toward which we are moving, a world in which particularity is no threat to unity, nor unity to ethnic identity. This is frightening, to move on to a road without maps, and yet it presents one of the challenges to us as believers in Jesus Christ, and our commitment to the future of humankind, rather than to its past.

Another characteristic of our world, and this is a corollary of the first, is the coming together of religious traditions as never before. Until quite recently, our world might have been seen as a conglomerate of semi-isolated pockets of societies in which religious affiliation and ethnic or national identity more or less coincided. Even in the pluriformity of North America, there were few Muslims, Buddhists or Hindus, and the dominant culture was basically that of the first group of colonialists to arrive. What we have been witnessing for many years is the movement of peoples, and conversions among formerly uniform ethnic religious groups, so that lines are beginning

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to blur. Reactions to this movement are often violent, particularly among the fundamentalists in every religious-ethnic group who are afraid of losing both their status and their “people”, as well as the security of clear-cut principles and creeds. The tension I see here is between a way of life (religious and cultural) in which religious leaders exercise an almost absolute moral power, and the risk involved in questioning that way of life; a tension between preservation of a treasured package received from the past, and inquiry into traditions to discern core religious values beneath a layered complex of structures, customs and teachings which have become absolutized. This movement, this letting-go is also frightening for those who feel responsible above all to the past, to the well-travelled road, such as some religious leaders in the Vatican or in Iran. I perceive this change as a challenge to our mission in the future, a challenge which must be taken up and met if we are to stride into the future, along this new road, with our eyes open, and not merely dragged into it, fighting every step of the way.

There is a statement of Malcolm X which sums up what I see as another significant trait of the world in which we live: “I believe there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those who do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the system of exploitation. I believe that there will be that kind of clash, but I don’t think it will be based on the color of the skin.” We are living in a world in which we know more about the inequalities and injustices around us, at the same time as we are growing in awareness of our common humanity. We also live in a world in which we are less reluctant to question authority, to see through the manipulations used by those in power to remain in power. But this is also a frightening reality, and presents a tension for Christians especially, conditioned as we are to obedience, respect for authority, and gentleness. Are we to stand with the oppressed, stand over against the oppressor, and still remain faithful to the Good News of peace and love? This is a question which cuts into the heart of our secure and protected world views. But it is a

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question asked in a world where every day 35,000 children under the age of five die because of malnutrition and curable childhood diseases; and where in the United States almost one in four African American males aged 20-29, is in jail, in prison, or on probation or parole. A world in which billions are spent on weapons. Reactions to this movement toward a fairer share of the goods and services of this world are also strong, even violent: in the elevation of the capitalist economic system to the level of an absolute moral value, to wars called “just cause” and “freedom fights” against any who would question the way we have ordered our economies and world system. As Christians we must meet the challenge of this reality as part of our call to brotherhood and sisterhood. If not, we may stall too long at the crossroads, deliberately entrenched in an attitude of “hear no evil, see no evil, do no evil”, a culpable blindness in face of the frightening challenge to relinquish the security of our dominant position in the world, and move ahead into a more just world system.

This brings me to what I see as a fourth movement, the last I will mention here, though there are many others. This movement is more in the realm of ideas, but no less threatening or challenging. It is a growing awareness which some would call “relativism,” but which I prefer to call “de-absolutizing,” or what liberation theologians would refer to as “bias.” My delineation of the reality of our world is necessarily a vision from where I stand, from my bias, because each of us perceives reality in that way, whether or not we admit it. Our western assurance of objective truth and certainty as possible of attainment through careful, balanced reasoning, has prevented our admitting the reality of bias, the conditioned nature of our world views, our philosophies and our theologies. Acknowledgment of this limitation, this unavoidable bias or conditioning, is for me one of the most powerful forces behind a movement toward authentic human community. It is only in an honest admission of, and sharing of, our biases, our visions of the world, that we can hope to arrive at some measure of truth, recognizing that no one religion, no one system, possesses absolute truth. The challenge is to face one another and our very real differences within the context of our common

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humanity, rather than confronting one another as opponents in the war of ideas. We are asked to shift from our sharp “either/or” love of distinctions, to the gentler, mind-expanding recognition of the riches to be found in the “both/and” embrace found in so many cultural traditions. Reactions to this movement toward recognition of our limitedness, toward a letting-go of our assurance of being in possession of the TRUTH, can be seen in the camps of combatants for a variety of causes. I see these pitched battles over ideas, causes and moral issues as vestiges of a dying past, a past in which it was necessary for my ideas to prevail, and yours to be vanquished; a past of clear truth (mine) and untruth (yours). These pitched camps are now blocking the crossroads, preventing the flow of ordinary pilgrims from walking on into the future, down the new road, exchanging different views as they journey together down the road.

I perceive these four movements, then, as particularly significant currents in our world today, presenting as they do, challenges for mission in the future. The movement toward an earth and earthling consciousness, the acceptance of religious and cultural pluralism as positive values, the questioning and restructuring of our economic systems, and the recognition of the dynamic, non-absolute nature of truth as conceived and expressed by human beings.

My perception of these movements grew out of my own mission experience in Indonesia. I went there equipped with a Roman Catholic tradition, a pluralistic educational background, formal theological studies, and a desire to help young Indonesians in the process of building up their own church. The reality into which I had plunged began to loosen the bindings on the theological baggage I had brought with me. In teaching, I was soon aware that while we shared a common humanity, our thought patterns and biases, symbols and world visions, were very different. It became apparent that I had been mistaken in presuming that my educated western ways were normative, that Catholic theology could be universal, when it was, in fact, the product of a mono-cultural, one-gender tradition. The awareness that the world was much larger than the portion of it in which I had been nurtured, taught me to

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separate essentials from accretions and cultural, historically-limited expressions. It was then that I really began to learn, to sit at the feet of others and listen to what was important to them, how they experienced the “golden ages” of western expansion and mission; I paid attention to the way they said things, to the way they treated others, to the ways they spoke of God, and to symbols and rituals that enriched their lives. My faith in Jesus Christ took deeper root, as I reflected on the wonder and variety of humanness. My awareness of what it means to be human, of different ways of living and thinking, enlarged my world, making me realize how small my planet, my world had been. Reciprocity in mission had begun within the enclosure of my Catholic world.

After seven years of rather enclosed living, I moved with several Indonesian Sisters into a kampung (low-income neighborhood) in Jakarta, because we wanted to share the life of the indigenous people of the city, who were gradually being squeezed under in the rush for modernization. We chose that particular area, the Peanut Garden, because the indigenous Betawi people who lived there were devout Muslims. Our neighborhood was Muslim, because the people were Sudanese-Betawi. On seeing my pale face, they assumed I was Christian. They accepted the fact that Relly was Christian because she was Florinese, that Lina was Christian because she was Chinese, and that Lestari was Christian because she came from a Christianized area of central Java.

We found it quite natural in planning our housewarming to invite the women to help us cook, to ensure that everything would be halal (kosher); and to invite the haji to read from the Koran. He found it natural to ask what our prayer for the neighborhood would be, and to find the appropriate Surahs to ask for peace, harmony and mutual respect. Our mission was to be a peaceful presence, living as neighbors within the cultural context of the kampung, and not to be divisive seekers of converts. We were able over the years to convince our neighbors that we had come to share their way of life, to learn from them, and to work with them to make life in the kampung better, without sacrificing traditional ways. We awoke each morning hearing the repeated proclamation “Allah Akbar” - God is Great - and the echo of this now has more meaning for me than all the analytical, philosophical explanations of God’s transcendence. We learned of the strength that comes

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from a profound attitude of Islam - submission to God-the-Great - and of the openhanded sense of the ummah, the brotherhood and sisterhood of the faithful. And I think our neighbors learned that Jesus - their nabi 'Isa - had among his followers those who respected others, lived simply in order to share with others, and tried to live in love as the greatest of all binding laws. Had we remained within the confines of our privacy and our privileged, secure Christian enclave, we would not have been enriched, nor would our Muslim friends have been able to live on a day-to-day basis with a group of multi-cultured Christians. Living in a pluralistic society is a positive good, one which sharpens our sense of who we are, and teaches us to open our eyes to the goodness and beauty in those who are different in so many ways, yet one with us in basic humanity. Reciprocity in mission had expanded to shared life with those of one of the great religious traditions, and was made possible because we went there as neighbors, not as teachers, or social workers or as commissioned missionaries.

After fifteen years in Jakarta, it was time to turn over my work to Indonesians, and also to leave our Peanut Garden home, to work with basic Christian communities among the Dayak people in Kalimantan (formerly known as Borneo). It was there that I saw even more clearly the injustices built into the world system, even in such noble ideas as development work. The model for development was taken from our western ideals of individual initiative and the profit motive. The Dayaks lived in the interior of their island, where they had been pushed farther inland by tradespeople and by the newer incursions of logging companies and government projects. Where before they had decided when to cut what trees, they were now told, on this land which had been theirs for centuries, which trees they were allowed to cut, and that their traditional longhouses were not fit dwellings for enlightened human beings. Materially, they were not usually poor; because of their isolated villages, they were poor in the services of education, medical care and in Christian ministers.

These sturdy, exuberant Dayak people taught me about other economies and other social structures. It was not efficient to spend so many days traveling the rivers and jungle footpaths to be with a village community of some 15-20 families, spending much of that time waiting for them to gather at our meeting place. But is the gospel about efficiency and great

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masses of people, or is it rather about the value of pitching one's tent where others have pitched theirs, and of little flocks? They lived in a kind of gender equality I have found nowhere else, and in a democracy which made it normal for their leaders to help cook, farm, and clean up. They had a sense of themselves, a deep drive toward freedom of spirit that is difficult to describe. And they taught me about joy in prayer: people whose daily lives were spent in lonely traveling and tilling, found God in the joyful noise of the village gathering, and in the relaxed sharing of common prayer. The economy of stockpiles, efficiency and judging worth by quantity and numerical increase - all lost their value in the healthy, hard-working communities of freedom-loving Dayaks. Mission as shared simplicity and joy, as freedom from the demands of impressive results and concrete projects were taught me by these Dayak communities.

The fourth phase in my overseas mission experience took me to Irian Jaya (the western, Indonesian, half of New Guinea), where I returned to teaching, in a Pastoral Institute, helping to prepare young women and men for ministry. It was here that the process of de-absolutizing seemed to gel. The Irianese are Papuans who are, by colonial and anti-colonial accident, included in the political entity of Asia. In teaching our students a summary history of the development of Christian traditions and rituals, I soon realized that I was dealing with a people whose sense of history was minimal, but whose awareness of cosmic connectedness was vital. They related not so much to a chain of events and personalities, as to the ageless, timeless space of a world both seen and unseen. I discovered an innate sense of dignity and a complete lack of awe in face of the newcomer to their island. I also shared their pain, inflicted by those who called them "primitives" and sought to "civilize" or "humanize" them. I shared their anger at becoming captives, suspects and minorities in their native place; at seeing efforts to impose an alien religious tradition on them.

I learned that deep, intense human feelings can enrich our lives when allowed expression; that a fine sensitivity to others can be hidden within awkward, unpolished exteriors. Again I experienced Christian worship, permeated with full-bodied singing and dancing and laughter, which spoke



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more clearly of life and joy than do our subdued, serious and somnolent services. I learned of justifiable anger and resistance, of passionate efforts toward the salvation, the very existence of a people and their culture. I had been gradually learning the lesson, but it was in Irian that it nudged its way deep into my being: that my “absolutes” were in reality my limited, conditioned reading of reality, interpretations emerging from where I stood, from the angle, the bias of my limited vision. Reciprocity in mission had shown me that faith in Jesus is a seed planted within a culture, yet transcending any particular culture; that the gospel is Good News for people of all cultures, and while it breaks down the walls of the religious-ethnic construct, it breaks open the near-sighted world-views of monolithic societies.

What are some of the ISSUES raised in this emerging world of planetary awareness, religious and cultural pluralism, solidarity with victims of injustice, and de-absolutization of truth? And what is our mission in the future, along the untried road?

1) The first issue I would see is the issue of PLURALISM itself. Do we accept this as a positive aspect of human reality? And if we accept it as a positive value, then how will it be possible to form some semblance of unity in the midst of all this riotous variety? I have no clear answer; I do not, however, hope for unity from any one religion, nor from any particular civilization or culture, nor from any socio-economic-political structure. I think the first step toward unity and community must be the acceptance of diversity, pluriformity and difference as deeply positive human values. Unless I legitimize the otherness of the other, unless I acknowledge my bias, and the other acknowledges a similar limitedness, then I see little hope for communication, community or peace. If we were taught that a certain uniformity, agreement, acceptance of common ideals was the basis of community, and possible of attainment, I think we can no longer expect this if we are to survive. I am convinced that we must move toward a world in which it is possible and permissible to speak honestly about our deep beliefs, doubts and hopes, and listen as others do the same, in the spirit of evangelical

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simplicity and boldness (parrhesia). Only then can we move more modestly, more humbly into dealings with others. Our mission will be one of seeking out with others, who have very different ideas, the hidden bedrock of human community. I think it will have something to do with human-heartedness, with meta and karuna, with ahimsa, with iman and ihsan, with doing the truth in love.

2) The second issue I see is that of RELIGIOUS TRUTH. Is Jesus Christ still unique in a pluralistic world? Is the Christian revelation for all humankind, or are there others, equally valid? I think we must be careful in speaking of Christianity, Christian faith, even of Gospel values, that we are not confusing alloys with the drop of pure gold. Religious faith and adherence to a religion are very much bound up with cultural and ethnic identity, so that it is often difficult to distinguish between the religious core and what Segundo refers to as ideological elements, which must be approached with a healthy suspicion. Religions are man-made structures, and as such are limited by time, space, history; and as human constructs they can be changed, often should be changed, and sometimes must be changed. The initial spark of revelation, the quietly burning flame of Spirit enkindled in its conception and always in danger of being extinguished, is housed in very earthen, human vessels. As such, religions are vulnerable to manipulation by power figures, as history past and present amply testifies. We must relativize religions, with their cultural expressions and secure traditions, often encrusted with age and named sacred and immutable by those who cling to them as protection, sometimes even as protection against the risks entailed in responding to new and challenging calls from the God who cannot be bound by past traditions. The living God of all faiths transcends religion, and above all, our formulations about religion.

The living God invites us in a future mission to be involved in sitting down, circle-wise, and uninterested in power, with those of other faiths, to witness to the faith that is in us, to listen to the witnessing of others, and remain in respectful silence (or sing in jubilation) at the wonder of the one God who is the core of all our faiths, and so often hidden beneath the structures we have created.

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3) The hands which have made these structures have often been hands armed with a sword, the banknote, or the persuasive power of spiritual threats. History shows us how religion has bred intolerance and divisiveness, persecutions and inquisitions. Fisher asks: “What is it about the religious (or ideological) view that generates a capacity for intolerance of others and hence for intergroup violence?” I would venture to say that it is because each of us is so sure we possess THE TRUTH, which others should come to see and accept. And this is the third issue which seems to be bound up in the tension between mission and pluralism. On the new road in mission, we shall not engage in mission in order to convert others, through mission schools and clinics, publications, door-to-door campaigns or by employing public relations firms to bring others to our point of view. This is not mission, but a continuation of the game of power, an attempt to win the war of ideas, so certain are we that we know THE TRUTH. If mission is to be in keeping with the reality of our world, and faithful to the God-who-calls, it will be undertaken with OUR conversion in mind. Mission can no longer be seen as the sending of the enlightened, those who possess the truth, to those who sit in darkness and ignorance. We are all of us a mystery of light-in-darkness and darkness shot through with light. We will walk the road of mission, go out to others in humility, in humanity, bearing the light of our Christian faith within the clouded and smeared lamps of religious and cultural structures which often impede the light from shining clearly. We will sit down with those of other faiths, with those of no-faith, to learn from them, realizing that their lights are also encased in holders encrusted with age, and burning in an alien oil.

4) A final issue I see is the question of SALVATION. Certainly few of us would lay claim to the saying “outside the church, no salvation”; nor even “outside anonymous Christianity, no salvation.” If I left for Indonesia with the idea of helping to “plant the church more deeply,” I returned hoping that I had joined with others in moving toward the kingdom, which will always be just beyond our grasp in this life. And if I went as a Christian seriously interested in social concerns, I have returned as a human being who is trying to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, eaten up with outrage and shame at

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the injustice and suffering heaped upon my sisters and brothers, so often by religious people like myself, people who speak of heavenly salvation of souls, as somehow unrelated to the well-being of human flesh and blood. I pick up my Bible to read about salvation, and find words that mean broadening, enlarging, creating a space where people can breathe freely and grow, then move together toward the kingdom of justice and peace. I read of rescue, saving, and good news for the poor. I hear the God who is loving kindness and faithfulness speak up for the people of no account; and I see Jesus doing the same thing, trying to help us dream of a kingdom where there are no barriers of class, or wealth, or power; where there are no aliens. And I wonder how it was possible for me not to have seen it before. And then I know that because I was sent out among others - the Rajabs and Asmawis, Tariana and Awin, Lukas Sabiak and Anselina Tepu - that my eyes were opened. In sharing their lives, in working with them to find meaning in life, my eyes were opened, and I was able to see what was hidden from me before. They opened for me the way of salvation which is rooted in human community, in helping to shape more this-world justice, in the hope that we are moving on the road that leads to the kingdom.

The future of mission in a pluralistic world, if there is to be a future that will be unifying and not divisive, will be a journey of conversion for us, and a blessing of peace for those among whom we are sent to live. It will be a free solidarity with the nobodies of the world, experiencing the powerlessness of the powerless Christ. It will mean learning from others, sitting down with them, not standing over them. The future of mission in our world will no longer be a battle of adversaries, nor a game between competitors, but a dance.

As a Christian, I am captivated by the music of the gospel, by the wonder of God's love, revealed in Jesus whom we call Christ. I spend my life in straining to hear the music, sometimes deaf to it, sometimes not getting myself in syncopation, not getting it quite right. If people ask me why I'm dancing, and want to join the dance, I'll do my best to help them hear the music, then let them go, so they can create their own new dancing to the

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captivating music. But I hear other songs, played by strange instruments, and see people dancing in a different way. How can I tell them they're all mixed up, and wrong? I sit, and watch, and listen, and try to catch the sense and harmony in their dance, and praise them for it. And the longer I watch them dance, the longer they watch me dance, we see that our music and our dancing have much in common; and sometimes I will clumsily try their dance, and they mine, and we will look around and see how different we are, how clumsy and yet how whole we are, and we will join hands and praise the God who makes our music, prisms through our very different lives, and thought patterns and religions.

Because of one thing I am certain: the God of Abraham and Sarah, the God of Jesus Christ, the God of Muhammad, the nameless One of Hinduism, of Buddhism . . . of all faiths and of all un-faiths, is the God who created adam as one humankind, to live in solidarity, in a harmony which reflects the dynamic, living harmony of God who is Father, Mother and Musician for us. The future of mission in a pluralistic world is to proclaim, to witness to the ends of the earth, to all nations, by our presence and by our dance, that Jesus Christ has captivated us, and drawn us into his dance. But we will force none, urge no one, cajole no one to move to a music they neither understand nor want to hear. We will dance in the streets, among the nobodies, with others who are moving to other music, and not timidly two-step within the safety of our monolithic churches. We will move on from the well-traveled road, go past the crossroads and onto the new road which lies ahead, ready for our shoeless, dancing feet. We will rejoice in the richness of God's mercy in making us different, flinging the baggage of our narrow traditions behind us, hands free to reach out to others in the handclasp of earthlings, all on the journey toward the same "Lord of the Dances."

## RESPONSE TO “THE FUTURE OF MISSION IN A PLURALISTIC WORLD”

**Andrew D. MacRae**

Let me first of all acknowledge the freshness and openness of Sr. Bohlen’s presentation. One of the elements contributing to its freshness is the reflection of personal growth and development in a person thoroughly familiar both with the cherished content of the Christian faith, and with the cultural diversity of the world in which she has been called to serve.

I found the presentation of particular interest, because of the references to Indonesia, where I made a brief visit twenty years ago. I still have the most vivid memories of that beautiful country.

I also acknowledge, with appreciation, a number of other elements in the presentation which I found helpful, including:

- a) openness to the distinctiveness of various cultural settings;
- b) evidence of continuous re-assessment of priorities in the light of changing contexts;
- c) growth in acceptance of persons with their own particular religious and theological loyalties;
- d) the goal of togetherness in religious experience, without forfeiting the validity of her own experience as one who continues to be “captivated by the music of the gospel, by the wonder of God’s love, revealed in Jesus whom we call Christ.”
- e) the value of indigeneity in the presentation of Christian faith and experience.

In her early remarks, Sr. Bohlen pointed to the move towards a world marked by unity which is not threatened by our particularity, and which does not threaten ethnic identity. In recent debates on Canada’s nationhood, in wrestling with the proposed Meech Lake Accord, the nation’s unity has been threatened by particularity, in proposed solutions which, for many, seemed to threaten, demand or ignore ethnic identity, according to personal or group perspectives.

Her plea for the recognition of the convergence, to some extent, of religious traditions, in which accepting attitudes replace inbred intransigence, is relevant, although stating it still leaves us with the effects in

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all of us of the solidarities and shaping influences of our own heritages. She makes her plea for a recognition of the needs and aspirations of the poor and oppressed, warning, in Malcolm X's words, of the struggle to come.

The eighth century (BC) prophet, Amos, had addressed these very issues very clearly, and had made it plain whose side God was on! Jesus, likewise, made it quite clear that His mission was to identify with the poor, the sick and the oppressed, in order to bring them into living contact with the Living God.

I confess to having some difficulty in declaring a preference for “de-absolutizing” or even “bias” over “relativism” as descriptive of the movement she discerns in the realm of ideas. I applaud her laudable attempt to overcome the blindness of prejudice and cultural absolutism, but, it seems to me, we must be careful, if I may use a familiar metaphor, not “to throw the baby out with the bath-water”, in a situation in which the Christian view of the uniqueness of Christ is the baby and our cultural assumptions are the bath-water!

There is really no need to abandon, for example, the truth-claims made for Jesus Christ in order to be seen to be accommodating of other views. It is surely perfectly possible to accept others, without endorsing their views. While I strongly support the desire to accept the sincerity and the heritage of those with other religious systems, I can find no way of accommodating their value-systems as equal to the Christian view, if the cost of such accommodation is the abandonment of the uniqueness of the gospel, and of Christ. Many moral ideas we share with others, but the Incarnation of Truth in Christ is non-negotiable.

I very much like, however, the idea of dynamic truth, and regard static rigidity as unhelpful. But the dynamic of the gospel is the dynamic of the unique and living Christ. Also, the concept of mission as a peaceful presence has its own validity, and the steady growth of Christian numbers under the Communist regimes of the world testifies to that.

I am not sure to what extent her “theological baggage” has been lightened, and to what extent her encounter with the diversity of the world and of faith-expressions has lightened her “prejudicial baggage.” But that

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may be wishful thinking on my part, since it has been my experience in a ministry which has taken me to 50 different countries, that, while my tolerance level and acceptance level have risen considerably, my theology of the gospel has actually been strengthened, and confirmed, and the theological bag is more important than ever, although it has undoubtedly been emptied of many burdensome prejudices and non-essential accretions.

In the light of all this, my greatest question about the paper is that of the effect her experiential and cultural growth has had on the major core of her faith. It is, I believe, rather difficult to confess to certainty about the one God, who belongs to all religions, as her closing section suggests, and, at the same time, see the future mission of Christians as “. . . to proclaim, to witness to the ends of the earth, to all nations, by our presence, by our dance, that Jesus Christ has captivated us. . . .” That is the healthy dilemma with which she faces me. I am asked to reflect on “The Gospel Proclamation in a Multicultural Context”.

From the beginning of the church’s story, the proclamation of the Good News has been a central activity of the Christian community. Anyone who is familiar with the Hebrew heritage and Semitic records, knows that, in the traditional stories about creation, enshrined in the opening passages of Genesis, the Word of God is the creative thing. The ancient Hebrews identified word with action.

“And God said, ‘Let there be light’, and there was light.” God spoke, and it happened.

Of course, there is a real danger in thinking that, if we can say the right things, and articulate the message clearly, in terms of defining and declaring the Christian message, we shall have somehow acted effectively. The truth is that, when all our words have been spoken, the real test of effectiveness is what happens as a result. Unless our words are accompanied by redirected attitudes and renewed actions, the words have no meaning. The apostle Paul put it rather bluntly when he wrote, “I may speak in tongues of men or of angels, but if I am without love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal.” Mark you, it should also be noted that he went on to say that even acts of seeming charity have no value either, unless they, too, are charged and motivated by love.



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I need hardly tell you that, for a number of years, and even in the sacred halls of our theological institutions of learning, the ministry of proclamation was rather severely undermined, by neglect at least, if not worse than that. Indeed, I well remember, when I was a student at New College, Edinburgh, renowned in these days for the simultaneous presence on Faculty of the preacher-par-excellence, James S. Stewart, the enormously erudite Barthian theologian, Tom F. Torrance, and the gentle, yet pugnacious hammer of the fundamentalists, James Barr, reading the book, written by Canada's well-known and sometimes controversial commentator, Pierre Berton, entitled The Comfortable Pew, in which, with a strange blend of assumed authority and evident lack of information of some of the ecclesiastical situations on which he chose to comment, recommended a moratorium on preaching, at least for a time.

Now, I do not propose to engage in a prolonged defence of the preaching function, although I do give it high rating in my own thinking, and am glad to see a recovery of some kind of the awareness that there is some virtue in training persons who believe themselves called to a vocation which involves communication, to communicate with a degree of exegetical responsibility and intelligible, even interesting, verbal skill.

But to our point. What is the Gospel Proclamation in a Multicultural Context?

It is important to make some kind of foundational statement, about the nature of the message we are to proclaim, and the preacher is commissioned to share. We could spend much time debating the "givenness" of the gospel, its unchanging nature in a world of change, and the sources of the agenda to be tackled by the pulpit, and we might ask controversial questions like: does the Bible set the agenda? or the Church? or the world around us? Let me suggest, very simply that the task of proclamation, in terms of contemporary multiculturalism, is, to communicate the word of God, which is revealed, expressed and understood in the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and which is, in essence, a message of reconciliation, expressed in the love, forgiveness and acceptance of God.

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I will take my own stand on the affirmation that the central soteriological concept in the N.T. is **RECONCILIATION**. For me, at least, the central message and mandate of the gospel are best, and most succinctly summarized in St. Paul's words to the Christians in Corinth, when he writes:

In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

If that soteriological principle is kept in mind, we have already a basis for developing an approach for ministry in a multicultural context, and the proclamation is shaped by it.

When it comes to the application of the Good News in a pluralist context, we do well to remember that the message of reconciliation is expressed in the apostolic literature in terms of several basic ideas, including:

1. **Love.** Succinctly, the NT states, God is love, and he/she who dwells in love, dwells in God. Wherever you turn in the NT, the gospel is the good news of the love of God, whether in the story of Jesus' personal encounter with Nicodemus, and the well-known statement, "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life . . ." (Jerusalem Bible); or Paul's statement in Rom 5, "But God has shown us how much he loves us; it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us!" (TEV); or 1 John 3:1, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God!" (NIV). The foundation of the gospel in every age, and for every context, however diverse, is the love of God as demonstrated in the Incarnation.
2. **Forgiveness.** While, at first sound, this may seem more difficult to relate to a context in which a half-Christianized culture, such as the North American thinks it is pretty good as it is, and doesn't need forgiveness, and in which there is a wide diversity of views of God and how Deity relates to humanity, it is essential to the good news

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that there be a point of acknowledgment that all is not well with humanity, and that the good news is much more than a self-actualization programme in religious garb, but is, indeed, the restoration or making of a relationship of peace between God and humanity, through the Grace of forgiveness, which then forms a basis for lateral expressions of forgiveness in human society.

3. **Acceptance.** The good news of reconciliation insists that, in Christ, God accepts humanity, not on account of its achievement, merit, or innate goodness, but on the basis of His unrestricted love, His acceptance of the pains of human alienation, and His offer of a reconciled relationship.

I am suggesting that, in these theological concepts there is a basis for the proclamation in a multicultural setting.

The paper we have heard related the gospel particularly to religious pluralism. In this kind of discussion, I suspect most people want this to be the bottom line of concern. Of course, with the continuing and rapid growth of the immigrant population, particularly from contexts where another religion is dominant, and in the light of our North American hesitancy to intrude into other people's privacy, and also in view of the changing value systems, the widespread challenges to exclusivity in religion from developments like the so-called New Age movement, the assumption is made that there really is no room for Christian particularity in the claims we make for the gospel or even in the claims we make for Christ. At best, it is popularly believed, he is a *primus inter pares*. We live in a context of religious syncretism and relativism. The liberal movement in the 19th century sought to make the faith acceptable by reversing the Reformed view of Christianity as the record of God's search for humanity, seeing, from Schleiermacher on, religion as humanity's search for God. And much of that thinking has passed over into modern existentialism, with its highly subjective criteria for evaluating the true and the meaningful, and modern evangelicalism, with its gospel of self-fulfillment, based as much on the decision of the human being as on the prevenient initiative of Divine grace.

All of this has made the task of Christian proclamation in North America more difficult and complex, since to make any exclusive claims for the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the revelation of God is to earn the pejorative reputation of intolerance and religious prejudice.

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My plea is that the proclamation be made, without any diminution of the claims we make for Christ, in such a way that those who come from another religious milieu will find us to be the persons of deep and real conviction, whose spirit and whose words convey the message of reconciliation, by adequately representing the love, forgiveness and acceptance of God.

To be truthful, I believe the development of a Christian apologetic which is sensitive to, and loving in its attitude towards, those of other faiths, will help to prepare the way for effective and genuine Christian evangelism.

I have no reservations about the claims I make for Christ. I do not regard him as *primus inter pares*, and I make no apology for standing with the apostolic witness which claims that in Christ, God has revealed himself uniquely and savingly, but all of that without pouring scorn on the integrity of those who, with different background, and training, are genuinely committed to the light of the religious faith in which they have been nurtured. But courtesy is no reason for compromise.

Of course, multiculturalism is expressed in other than religious ways, and the Christian proclamation of reconciliation must speak and be relevant to pluralism in its other forms, including cultural pluralism, social pluralism, moral pluralism, and the pluralism of our sub-cultures, such as the youth culture, the drug culture, and the drop-out culture. It is far beyond the range of Sister Bohen's paper and this response to address these to-day.

If, however, the gospel proclamation in a multicultural society is anything, it is to be expressed in the involvement of a ministry of reconciliation, by word, deed and example, by which there is offered to our generation, in terms related to its experience, a message of love, forgiveness and acceptance through Jesus Christ.

## RESPONSE TO THE FUTURE OF MISSION IN A PLURALISTIC WORLD

Donald W. Shriver, Jr.

Marian Bohen's essay is a gentle, eloquent and persuasive testimony to the power of Christian presence to merely the force of concepts or even her beautiful, poetic expressiveness; the source is in her living with her Indonesian neighbors which so shapes her talking about them. In this she reminds me of the continuing attraction of the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer for many of my generation. We listen most intently to those whose words emerge from their lives, especially lives made vulnerable to suffering and death in the service of God and a neighbor.

"The principles of theological pluralism need to be inductive," says Fumitaka Matsuoka. "They must emerge as the task itself proceeds."<sup>1</sup> The motto of this method would have to be, "This way we walk," rather than, "Here I stand." Bohen's essay embodies the former rule. She knows that the discovery of what lies around the next turn of the road comes only to those who walk around that turn. For her, as for Hebrews 11 and 12, this means following the pioneer and perfecter of our faith into a future which, in his identification with us, even he did not try to predict.

It seems crassly intellectual to disturb the graceful dance of this essay with a few clumsy academic two-steps, but at the end she does invite us into her own pilgrimage by posing four issues with which she herself is wrestling; and in the spirit of a fellow-wrestler, here are a few comments in response to her posing of those issues:

### 1. *Is pluralism itself a good thing?*

My answer has to be more ambiguous than here. Surely a certain kind of pluralism is a good thing--perhaps the kind that they had in Lebanon thirty years ago, not the kind they have now. Ambiguity haunts even Marian Bohen here; for, having dismissed "common ideals" as the only source of human social unity, she appeals to a "hidden bedrock" of our common humanity, a bedrock not to be uncovered, perhaps, until the last eschatological days of our pilgrimage. But that is an ideal; and as a human being in need of some proximate composed relations with my pluralistic neighbors, I need more than eschatological hope if I am to engage with them, as fellow pilgrims,

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along our common way, in our dialogue of contrasts and contraries. I need some rules of the road, enforced if necessary, to permit us to discipline our mutual disposition to intolerance while we are working our way towards a community that is more than tolerant, that is mutually affirmative. Such an end requires a proleptic means to that end, a social system, for example, which urges and even compels its members towards dialogue and away from murder. In a harrowing scene in Attenborough's Gandhi, Hindu and Moslem refugee lines are moving in opposite directions on either side of a gully. One, then another, then a crowd of people from each side leap into the gully with their axes and knives, and murder ensues. At that moment, Gandhian pacifism to the contrary, the great social need was for a body of police or soldiers to keep those two hostile groups of humans apart from each other. It would have been a very approximate, defective defense of social order; but it would have been better than the murders.

How can the half-tolerant talk with the wholly intolerant: if laws protecting freedom of speech and police protecting those laws provide no sure answers to such murky questions, they are nonetheless indispensable to permit some of us to live together in our mutually constructed murk. Pluralism is a good or a bad thing depending on the procedures we agree to follow in bringing it to pass. In this vale of sin, some of those procedures may have to do with coercion. If the shadow of Reinhold Niebuhr falls across this observation, that shadow is better than the darkness of mayhem!

### *2. Is any religion absolutely true?*

Karl Barth would have loved most of Bohen's answer to this question. Even at its best religion is only one of the servants of God on earth; and at its worst, it is one of God's worst enemies--the final battleground between divine mercy and imperial human pride.

But what about the possible imperialism even in the acclamation of "the one God who is the core of all faiths?"<sup>2</sup> How do we know that the One is at the core of the Many? Do all roads, Hindu-like, lead to the same core?

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Can we who use the term “God” rightly use it to describe a core not only hidden from us but refused as an attribute or way of speaking among the professors of faiths other than our own? It is one thing to speak of God in a tonality akin to that of Allah Akbar; it is another to use the term on behalf of the Buddhists, who shy away from it.

Between the theological “differentializers” and the theological “universalizers” there lies a great gulf here.<sup>3</sup> I wonder if Bohen is trying to bridge the gulf prematurely. Is she carrying with her, on the journey, some theological baggage necessary to her journey as a Christian? Who goes on any long journey without any baggage whatsoever? Our baggage may be part of the problem of achieving community with our fellow pilgrims, but they have their baggage, too, which brings yet more mystery and confusion to our experience of each other on the road. But one way of presence there is simply living in the mystery and confusion, in “the proleptic promise of mutual relatability in the midst of the pain of alienation.”<sup>4</sup>

### *3. To be faithful, must one lay claim to “the truth”?*

No, to the contrary; but let us be honest about many an experience of the presence of the Divine to human consciousness; in that experience, we do not seem to possess the truth; it seems to possess us. Therein lies one reason why all religious folk need to pray, “Lead us not into temptation.” One thinks of Luther: “Here stand I. God help me. I cannot do otherwise.” Ah so, Brother Martin? If God helps you, you might do otherwise; and, if you are to be a pilgrim, you may stand there for the moment; but you must not stand still forever. Yet, to give you your due, even pilgrims do stand still at some time in some moments, especially as they talk with fellow pilgrims about the directions of the journey. Their very travel, they are likely to believe, proceeds in their stances of faith. And they are likely to explicate their reasons for being here in terms of those stances. “Explanation is where the mind is at rest.” Without some resting places, no road is worthy of human travel. Theological dogma and creeds are attempts to define such resting

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places for specific moments in the pilgrimage of faith, to define the boundaries of the very roads that the faith means its adherents to follow.

The clash between creeds is the truly poignant, painful moment in the dialogue of religions. What we do in that clash determines the very possibility of our traveling together of any distance down any road. How much, in the contemporary world, one yearns that Tillich's "God beyond god" will keep us from brandishing our dogmas like swords against each other? But it is a hard maneuver for mind and spirit together: "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2). Pushed back to that core of our faith, what do we do in relation to those who deny its reality, who urge upon us their own cords of faith? And, especially, what do we do in relation to those who refuse the role of reciprocal listeners to what we urge? It is here that pluralism becomes disjunctive."<sup>5</sup> What can one do to raise a hope for juncture?

The answer has to do with Bohlen's fourth and final issue:

### 4. *Is there something "saving" in the Christian faith?*

Putting together Joseph Hough's contrast of Babel and Pentecost with Marian Bohlen's image of our pilgrimage from one to the other, I remember that the pilgrimage goes by way of a cross where Babel erupted again the cruel chatter around that cross. "And he never said a mumbling word." He said a few words but he did a lot of listening. And in that listening some of us humans believe that we glimpse the companionship on earth of the One who, Creator of all things, wills to be vulnerable to the sufferings of all. And that vulnerability, we believe, saves us all from the devastations of our sufferings and from every other hindrance to the fulfillment of the divine image writ large in us all.

My faculty colleague Kosuke Koyama joins Marian Bohlen on this point (I am tempted to say "absolutely central point") of the Good News of Jesus: "Emmanuel" means God the Vulnerable, God the one wounded with us and for our salvation. How did some of our Christian missionaries ever "plant the image of the invulnerable God in the Asian mind?" Koyama asks. "God was presented as the stationary North Star, the absolute standard, unaffected by the physical, cultural, religious, spiritual needs of the people." Au contraire: "Is God open to being wounded? The Christian faith answers this questions affirmatively. How scandalous!"<sup>6</sup> And how marvelous.



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“Nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord!” And that is why we can make affirmations like the one made by our colleagues in Toronto when they write that “no aspect of created reality exists apart from the redemptive activity of God sealed in the resurrection of Jesus” and that “no cultural tradition is as a matter of principle excluded from the possibility of testifying to the Lordship of Christ.”<sup>7</sup> If the “cultural tradition” of Roman crucifixion illustrates the point, what might not illustrate it? There was a Lordship scandalously exercised “in obedience to death, even the death” of that cross, from which “God has highly exalted him,” in anticipation of a final exaltation of the least of these the brothers and sisters of the Risen One. Universal exaltation stemming from universal vulnerability: that is the Christian doctrine of the saving power of God.

It almost sounds as if the only way to end this allegedly academic footnote to a brilliant essay is to end with a bit of evangelical preaching, as text to accompany kenotic listening and doxological dance. It doesn’t have to be an arrogant, loud, or dialogue-excluding bit of preaching, does it? It doesn’t have to be a testimony which contradicts in its outer form of contempt its inner message of . . . amazing grace? I think not, I hope not, I pray not. Here stand I, too. Better: in this I live and move and have my being and the power that might make true companions of us all.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>. Fumitaka Matsuoka, “Pluralism at Home: Globalization Within North America,” Theological Education, Vol. XXVI, (Supplement 1, 1990) pp. 37-38.

<sup>2</sup>. Marian Bohen, p. 000.

<sup>3</sup>. Mark Kline Taylor and Gary J. Becker, “Engaging the Other in a Global Village,” Theological Education, Volume XXVI, (Supplement 1, 1990) pp. 69-77.

<sup>4</sup>. Matsuoka, p. 41.

<sup>5</sup>. Matsuoka, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup>. Kosuke Koyama, “Evangelism in the Light of a Vulnerable God,” Faith and Mission, Southeastern Baptist Seminary, Volume II, #2, Spring 1985, p. 72.

<sup>7</sup>. Marsha Hewitt et al., “Education for a Global Theology,” Theological Education, Vol. XXVI, (supplement 1) pp. 104-105.

## **Theological Publishing and Theological Education**

**Barbara Wheeler**

Most theological educators simply assume that the books in theology and other scholarly fields that are needed in seminary classrooms and for faculty research are ready at hand. They further assume that any faculty manuscript that is well-written and judged to be important by other scholars in the field will find a publisher. Over the years, our enterprise has come to count on resourceful and ingenious publishers to find ways to provide what faculty and students need, a steady stream of good books in the various areas of theological studies.

Until quite recently, these have been safe assumptions. For two centuries, publishing has been one of the most healthy and durable enterprises on the North American continent, offering a wide range of resources to numerous and diverse audiences, including those who care about serious books. In some ways, this is surprising, because publishing -- unlike music, opera, dance, experimental theater, the visual arts and even radio and television of high quality -- has never had the substantial charitable and government support for the original venturesome, serious-minded edge of its work that other important cultural enterprises can claim. Despite the fact that books, the cultural products that convey ideas in their most complete and complex form, are perhaps the most essential means of forming and preserving culture, book publishing has been operated as commerce, not culture, as an activity that must sustain itself as a profit-making venture. Even not-for-profit publishers, which are just a tiny sector of the industry, are usually expected to be financially self-sufficient. A few get subsidies, but most do not. Almost all book publishing, then, operates on a commercial base.

The danger here should be apparent. The ideas most likely to make their way in book form to the public in such a system are those that large audiences are willing to buy. New ideas, ideas that dissent from the views of the majority, and ideas important to small audiences with specialized interests are at risk of not being published at all,

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because the books that contain them are less likely to turn the profit that publishing houses require to survive.

What is remarkable in the history of publishing is that we North Americans seemed to have sensed the potential threat that this situation poses to the well-being of our culture and to the survival of our democratic institutions, and we have responded to that threat by conferring a special status on the business of publishing, a status that provides protection for serious publishing and for other parts of the industry that serve minority interests.

Most of the provisions that have insured that publishing would serve diverse interests and needs have not been formal, legal ones. The tax laws of the United States did, until recently, offer publishers a few special privileges, but generally publishing has been protected more informally, by some strongly held cultural attitudes and values. From the beginning of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, publishing was widely viewed as a very special sort of business: an opportunity to do good while doing well.

It became the vocational outlet for entrepreneurs who believed that learning and ideas were integral to personal virtue and the public good, values for which the founders of the great publishing houses cared enough to forego the large profits they could have reaped from publishing only popular books for mass consumption. The cultural norms that regulated publishing certainly allowed owners of firms to amass modest family fortunes, and many publishers did become decorously rich, but these norms did not permit the kind of rapaciousness that was common in industries such as steel, railroads, oil and land development. Publishing was a business for families that valued education and often religion as much as they did financial gain, and the names of those families still ring with the prestige that publishing once had: the Harper brothers, Charles Scribner and sons, Nelson Doubleday, Frank Sheed and Maisie Ward, Alfred A. Knopf, William B. Eerdmans. Each of these publishers and the houses they founded became known for its willingness, even eagerness, to seek out and publish books that were original, intellectually daring, culturally exciting or socially significant, whether such books made a lot of money or not. Because of these publishers' commitment, which was

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combined with a solid business sense that stopped short of greed, the public could indeed simply assume that the books they wanted would be ready to hand and that manuscripts of merit would get published.

We can no longer make such assumptions. Beginning in about 1970, the mammoth corporations that have changed so much else in our cultural and economic life discovered publishing, and, in particular, the enormous profits to be made on books that become bestsellers. Corporations began to shop for publishing houses, and they made offers for many firms, most of which had not been serving the mass market that the corporations were interested in but which could be turned in the direction of more profitable publishing once they were acquired. Many of the owners of the old and prestigious firms were descendants of the founders but were not now themselves personally involved in publishing; and the norms that had protected publishing, that shared sense that publishing houses should not be milked for maximum profit, had mostly evaporated. So the owners sold, to international publishing magnates like Rupert Murdoch, who bought Harpers, and S. I. Newhouse, who has sopped up Random House, Knopf and Pantheon, and to huge companies like CBS (Winston Press) and Gulf & Western (Simon and Schuster and Prentice Hall) and RCA (Random House before Murdoch). This is only a partial list of publishing mergers and acquisitions. The full amount is more confusing than a soap opera and much sadder. All this acquisitive activity creates huge amounts of debt, and the pressure of interest payments prompts the owners to do more quickly what they bought the publishing houses for in the first place: to cut out the modestly profitable lines -- good fiction, poetry, and serious non-fiction, including academic books -- in favor of the stuff that pays -- bestsellers, textbooks, mass market books, and a few standard reference works. And that is what has happened. Some presses have been stripped of their assets and closed down, such as Dutton. Many others that had established a distinguished reputation in particular areas of publishing, Macmillan in fiction, for instance, were made to abandon those programs. Almost all the acquired presses, which were already profitable when they were bought, have been told to get more profitable, fast, or else.

These changes in publishing have been mirrored by changes on the retail side of the book business. The old fashioned, culture-before-

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commerce book publisher had a bookselling counterpart, the owner of the independent bookstore that offered a wide selection of trade and specialized books along with knowledgeable service. Like the publishers, the owners of these stores believed in books and were content with more modest profits than they could have earned if they used their space and energy to sell something like automobiles. When publishing began to change, it became apparent that the task of the bookseller was to sell many copies of a limited number of books. That kind of selling could be done much more cheaply and at a much higher level of profit than the quality booksellers were doing it. Thus chains of stores offering a limited selection spread like wildfire through the shopping malls of the United States, frequently forcing the good bookstore in town out of business by offering discounts on the most popular books.

The combination of these developments in publishing and bookselling has created what Ted Solotaroff has vividly and aptly called "a literary-industrial complex." Both sides of the book business -- production and retail sales -- are dominated by enormous companies whose motive is to make as much money as possible. To achieve that goal, many publishers now try to publish and the chain book stores to stock only those titles that will be blockbusters. The consequence for us, the readers, is more of the kind of books that offer huge profits -- popular novels, self-help books and celebrity biographies -- and fewer books of high literary quality and serious intent. Good books are, of course, still published. Some of the acquired publishers are still doing the kind of work they used to do, though most are doing less of it. And there are small presses that serve a variety of small and specialized audiences. But the trends are ominous. Corporate owners are often dissatisfied with their new toys, both publishing houses and chain stores, because they are not as immediately lucrative as was hoped, and some have begun to sell them to other corporations, creating more confusion, pressure and debt. Further, since most of the large publishers have been bought, some corporations with a recent interest in publishing have begun looking for small ones. The widespread view of concerned observers in the industry is that things are bad for quality publishing and will get worse.

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Our world of theological education and theological studies is being deeply affected by these developments and by the change in cultural attitudes that has permitted them to happen. Some of the publishing companies that have been bought and reorganized were major suppliers of serious books in theology and religious studies. The religion division of Harpers, America's largest religious publisher, has been preserved though all the changes, though its promised new line of scholarly books has been slow to appear, while its stream of popular religious books and New Age and health and wholeness literature has become a torrent. But other publishers, including Doubleday, Macmillan, Oxford, Cambridge, Regnery, and Sheed and Ward, which for decades were important sources of good religious books, have oscillated in their commitment. Some years they bring on staff and publish a lot in the field. Other years they seemed to lose interest and let their religion editors wander off.

Theological publishing has also been affected because many smaller houses whose major work is theological publishing are for-profit businesses that are subject to the same pressures that have transformed big league publishing. Zondervan, for instance, which both publishes books and runs a chain of stores, has been bought by Harper & Row. Crossroad, the distinguished publisher of Catholic and Protestant books, is now allied with the German company Herder; in turn it has bought the quirky but promising new house call Meyer Stone. Other independent religious presses are being eyed hungrily and most are not turning their potential suitors away. The only commercial religious house that seems to me immune to the blandishments of buyers, at least for the time being, is Eerdmans, one of the last examples of the family-run business that cares enough to publish the very best.

So far I have focused on for-profit publishers, and I have tried to show how much is put in jeopardy when the discipline and self-restraint that publishers used to exercise with respect to money-making impulses is removed. But the problem is not restricted to commercial publishing. A similarly grasping and aggrandizing view has infected the owners of the other important publishers in our world, the non-profit presses of denominations, religious orders and universities. Many of these presses are, in fact, so seriously threatened

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that Christopher Bugbee and I made them the major focus of the research on Protestant theological publishing that we conducted two years ago.

In our report we describe in a very detailed way the situation of the publishing houses of mainline Protestant denominations, which have been major producers of books in theology and religion, including many classic texts and reference books that are used outside of mainline Protestantism. Many of these presses are very old. Generally they grew out of the tract and Bible printing operations of boards of Christian education and mission within the denomination. Until the most recent period, the identity of these presses was determined by their origins. Even after many of them became full-scale, successful trade publishers of books, the denominations that owned them viewed them primarily as an educational mission. After the Second World War, when the mainline churches were strong and American theology became a world-wide force, the scope of the mission of the Protestant presses was greatly expanded. Most of them were understood by their parent denominations to be important educational centers, contributing the best books they could to the ecumenical religious scene and the culture more broadly. The presses that were positioned in this way -- one thinks especially of Westminster, Beacon, Pilgrim and later Fortress -- lost their narrowly denominational flavor and became major intellectual and ecumenical enterprises. In some of those religious boom years of the late 40s and the 50s, these intellectual enterprises succeeded in supporting themselves. In others they did not. But since publishing was viewed as mission, it was expected to cost something, and denominational support was usually cheerfully tendered when it was needed.

That support, which was increasingly required as the boom quieted down in the 1960s and beyond, came in two forms. A few denominations provided cash subsidies. More common was the pattern of making available what one observer called "cash cows": a standard resource, developed by the denomination, that is likely to be a long-term steady seller, such as a new curriculum, a hymnal or a service book. The denomination pays the initial costs of production; the press is permitted to print and distribute the resource and to keep the income from the project. This regular stream of revenue from

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something that requires little capital outlay to produce and sell enables the press to publish some books that are important but that will not make much money -- many of the books that we like to have around for academic purposes fall into that category -- and to take risks on a few books that might not sell at all.

By providing support, the denominational owners of non-profit presses were exercising the same kind of self-transcendence that the private owners of commercial firms used to display. The denominations could have generated substantial revenues, especially in the 1950s when religious books were often bestsellers, if they had insisted that their presses turn to popular publishing. Or, since the presses were subsidized operations, the denominations could have required them to promote the denomination's immediate interests by publishing more books that were denominationally focused and fewer that met the needs of the broad audiences the presses developed beyond the denomination. But the majority of Protestant denominations did neither. They chose to publish books that might play a role in the vigorous theological conversation then going on and in forming social ideas and values rather than to generate extra income or to reinforce denominational identity in traditional ways.

This situation has very much changed. The last twenty years have been difficult ones for the mainline denominations and their presses. As membership and revenues to national headquarters have declined, the churches' conviction that they have an intellectual and educational mission beyond their own membership and boundaries has eroded. All forms of church-related education within the mainline denominations have, as a result, suffered losses, but the publishers have been especially hard-hit, for they almost alone among church activities are organized as businesses. They sell things. Why, denominational leaders began to ask, should we be supporting them? Shouldn't they be supporting us?

The general response to this question in the denominations, now that ideas in the culture about publishing as vocation and mission are no longer powerful, has been that publishing should, indeed, support other, more specifically denominational activities. At least it should not drain off funds that could be used in more denominational



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ways. Beginning about fifteen years ago, the publishers of most mainline denominations were told that they must become self-sufficient at a minimum. Some were instructed to go farther, to find ways to help the denomination improve its financial situation. Some publishing houses were pressed to give back some of the revenues from the “cash cows,” and some had to fight to keep those projects in the publishing house at all. Others were told that the “take” from publishing of all kinds, once the bills were paid, would be merged with general denominational revenues rather than being plowed back, as it had been before, into the support of marginally profitable projects like academic publishing. The result for denominational publishers (and for presses owned by religious orders and universities too, since most of these publishers have been finding themselves under similar pressures) has been very much like the result of acquisitions fever in commercial publishing. They are expected to publish those titles that will do very well financially and to stay away from other ventures. As in commercial publishing, this usually results in their publishing more popular books and fewer books of academic merit or of interest to the serious general reader.

It is worth noting that for one publisher, the consequences of financial pressure from the denomination resulted in what amounts to a publishing tragedy. Seabury Press, which was in terrible financial shape because it had no cash cows (the Episcopal Hymnal and Prayer Book are published by the Church’s pension fund), was simply sold, first to Winston, which was bought by CBS, which sold it to Harpers, where Seabury, except as a name that occasionally appears on an Anglican-looking book, no longer really exists. The directors of denominational presses that are not meeting their parent body’s financial expectations still shudder when they think about what happened to Seabury.

A few denominations do still provide direct support for their presses, but in most cases the price is high. In return for the denomination absorbing deficits, those presses have been reduced in size and their programs limited in scope to books and materials of largely denominational interest. The only church group that continues to provide substantial direct support to its press and boasts rather than

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complains about that commitment is the Unitarian-Universalist Association, which regularly provides operating capital so that its distinguished Beacon Press can flourish and grow.

In both sectors of publishing, then, greed and failure of vision are taking a severe toll. I have already pointed out that the current situation in book publishing favors the books that sell the most copies. It also favors formula books, books that are quickly written, cheaply produced and sold to the audience that buys a certain genre (mysteries, or Gothic novels, or in our world devotional poetry or Christian romances), reads them quickly, and then buys more books of the same sort. Interestingly, this system does not pose a threat to the publishing of highly technical treatises needed by only a few scholars, because desk top publishers and scholars presses can produce these works and sell them to the pre-identified audience that wants them and is willing to pay very high prices for them. But the great majority of books that we, our students and serious lay and clergy readers of theology use regularly will become scarce if these trends continue. Perhaps you have already heard from one or more faculty members about manuscripts that have been turned down, not because they did not have merit, but because the publishers to whom they were submitted were not sure that they could sell the requisite 5000 or so copies that their budget requires. At special risk in this system are the kind of books we need most: unusual books that break new ground, cut across established genre and disciplinary lines, and create new audiences. Editorial staff are still attracted to such books and know their value, but editorial judgment about the quality and value of a manuscript matters less and less in the decision to publish. The likely margin of profit matters more and more.

The pressure for profits has other unfortunate effects on our work as theological educators. To make big money, a book must not only sell a lot of copies but also sell them quickly. In the old days, when publishers were aiming for modest profit margins, they lived off their back lists. Books published and printed in past years provided a slow but steady stream of income with little new outlay. Because publishers must pay to store books and to reprint them, however, backlist sales do not satisfy publishers who are aiming for maximum

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financial returns. Therefore they keep books in print for shorter periods of time. In recent years many of the longer and more valuable backlists have been cut sharply. In my discussions with seminary faculty about publishing, the complaint I hear most often is that the books they want to use as texts for their classes, including some of the classics, are no longer available.

Another casualty is the physical quality of books. In an effort to widen the margin of profit, many books of permanent value -- the kind that students will want to keep for a lifetime after they buy them in seminary -- are published only in paper cover, flimsily bound, on paper that yellows after a year or two. Toward the same end, arbitrary limits on length are imposed. In some cases books are improved by being shortened, but often text is deleted, or notes and other scholarly apparatus are omitted for no other reason than to lower production costs and thus increase the percentage of the retail price that comes back to the publisher.

Finally, there is the matter of price. As is evident in the budgets of theological libraries, the cost of books to the buyer has escalated. Some of the increase is legitimate: Publishing costs have gone up fast. But some of it stems from publisher's greed, as does the increasing common practice of withholding the paperback edition as long as the hardcover edition of an important new book continues to sell.

The situation of serious theological publishing, in summary, is alarming. Since texts are the very fabric of theological studies, the shaky situation of publishing threatens theological education as well. Fortunately, there are steps theological educators can take to respond to the trends that so adversely affect their work, and I shall conclude by making some concrete suggestions directly to the readers of this article.

First, you can become advocates for serious theological publishing. Many of you are respected leaders in denominations, religious orders and universities that operate presses. Organizational decisions are continually being made that affect these presses, and, if you keep yourself informed about the state of your press and its needs, you can play an important political role as champion for its interests. Such advocacy is sorely needed, because the press's constituents, its

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readers, cannot be galvanized to take action on its behalf. For one thing, they are spread around the world and usually do not know what is happening to the press until decisive changes have already happened. Even if they do know, many of them have no clout, because they are not members of the denomination, order or university community that owns the press. But you are insiders, in an excellent position to remind your church body or university administration that publishing is not an unrelated business that earns income to be plowed into the real work of the church or the university. *A press is a means of educating the public, so its function in a church or university is central, not auxiliary or peripheral, and its requirements are those of other educational institutions and programs: It needs a mandate to do work of high quality, freedom from censorship and outside control of the content of what it does, and financial support -- not lavish subsidy, but whatever level of support is generally available to other educational projects from endowment or central sources.*

It is remarkable how rarely anyone in churches or universities, except the editorial staff of the press itself, bothers to argue this case. But it is also remarkable how much difference it can make when scholars and seminary leaders do get involved in questions about a press's future. A letter-writing campaign by Lutheran scholars, for instance, hastily organized by a leading scholar and a seminary dean, seems to have played an important role during the recent Lutheran merger in preserving the extensive academic publishing program of Fortress Press. At an earlier time, Beacon Press was saved from the decision of the denomination's Board to shut it down by a movement of clergy, scholars and lay leaders who overturned the decision in the Unitarian General Assembly. But crises are not the only opportunity. Presses can be whittled into insignificance as well as summarily executed, and several have been -- Judson and Pilgrim presses, for instance, have been reduced almost to skeletons in recent years. You can intervene in situations like these, insisting -- and getting other to insist -- that the press with which you have the closest ties be given a new mandate and the freedom to publish without interference and undue financial pressure.

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A second helpful role can be played with special effectiveness by academic deans. Seminary faculty members are major suppliers of manuscripts to publishers in theology and religion, but most faculty members do not understand the world of publishing and especially how it has changed in recent years in ways that make the author's task more difficult. Since serious religious publishing is not lucrative for most authors, literary agents -- the people who guide the authors of other kinds of books through the publishing jungle -- take little interest in theological writers. But guidance is needed nonetheless, and academic deans, one of whose jobs is to help faculty members to be productive, are in a good position to provide it. Deans can gain an overview of who is publishing what by reading publishers' catalogs cover-to-cover and can augment that survey by touring the book displays at guild meetings and talking with the press directors and academic editors who hang out there about what kind of books they are looking for. Then, as part of their regular reviews of faculty performance, or in casual conversations if you do not have such a system, deans can ask faculty members what they are writing or planning to write, and whether they have talked with a publisher about the project. If not, the dean should encourage an early inquiry to one or more publishers who seem likely to take an interest in that kind of work. In these days of difficulty and constraint in publishing, it is very much to the author's advantage to talk with publishers sooner rather than later, so that work can be shaped in ways that make its acceptance more probable. Since first books involve an extra risk and therefore are less likely to be accepted, junior faculty may need extra help. It is often a good idea to arrange some kind of introduction for a first manuscript: Senior colleagues and doctoral advisers, might, for instance, write to editors they know well, commending the new author and urging attention to the work. Introductions in general are a good idea. Successful editors do not expect that the best manuscripts will arrive unsolicited in the mail, so they spend a substantial amount of time on the road, foraging for new projects. If several members of your faculty are currently writing books or preparing to and have not already committed those projects to publishers, the dean might invite one of those roving editors to visit. The visit should include both open

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occasions for the editor and faculty members to talk and individual conversations. If your institution is affiliated with a denomination that owns a press, the dean should arrange for its director or academic editor to visit on a regular basis.

So far I have emphasized how the dean can help to make matches between publishers and faculty authors. As any effective yenta knows, however, sometimes the intermediary's role is to keep two parties apart when the match is not a good one or to comfort them when the arrangement does not work out. That is true here. The pressures that publishers are feeling are sometimes passed on to authors as pressure to adapt their work to the market in ways that violate its intellectual integrity. In our world, this does not happen often, but when it does, deans should be prepared to counsel faculty members to find another publisher rather than give in on serious issues of substance. They should be ready also to console and advise those whose work is rejected. Because there is so much emphasis on marketability in contemporary publishing, a rejection may have little to do with a manuscript's intrinsic merit. If this is the case, the dean may be able to help a faculty author find a publisher who has more resources and freedom to publish serious work.

These various matchmaking functions seem to me to be entirely consonant with the other parts of the job of an academic dean. If faculty members make contact with the right publishers, new avenues for faculty development may be opened up: Ideas for new projects may be formed, or faculty members may learn how to shape their ideas in forms and for audiences that are new to them. As this happens, the school's educational impact is enhanced and widened. These are, after all, among the dean's most important functions: to nurture, advise and challenge the faculty in the interest of a more powerful educational program.

The third and perhaps most significant step that your institutions can take to promote the cause of serious theological publishing is to help to sell books. You can do this in some small but significant ways. If you publish a journal, for instance, make sure that it has an adequate allotment of space for book reviews and an energetic book review editor. It is not unusual for the first reviews of an academic book to appear two years or more after publication,

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sometimes, sadly, after the book has gone out of print. So be sure that you are doing all that you can to bring good new books -- and not just those by your own faculty and graduates -- to the attention of your constituency. You can also help publishers who survive on a tiny margin by making it perfectly clear in institutional policy statements that copyright laws must be observed in institutional activities. With the exception of the personal purposes permitted by the law, no photocopies of copyrighted materials -- not hymns for chapel, not materials for class -- should be made and distributed without the publisher's permission. If all clergy and theological scholars understood the damage that promiscuous xeroxing does to publishers and authors and then behaved ethically in this regard, theological publishing might be in substantially healthier shape. You can underscore this for your own faculty and students.

But by far your largest contribution to getting good books sold is your bookstore. Most seminaries think of their bookstores primarily as a means of getting course texts to students: They classify them as auxiliary services, like the cafeteria. That may have been an appropriate view of the bookstore twenty years ago. But in those days all major cities and many medium sized towns had a Protestant theological bookstore, usually part of a denominational chain, and often a Catholic one as well. Now almost all the Westminster, John Knox, Judson and Fortress stores are gone, along with most of the Catholic ones. Those that remain, Cokesbury and small evangelical stores in the main, are struggling financially and increasingly emphasize church goods, which are more profitable than books. If there is going to be a good theological bookstore in your town, you, very likely will have to run it.

Your bookstore should, in other words, be viewed as a form of educational mission, as one kind of continuing education for clergy, laity and the broader community. Just as denominations and religious orders should support publishing houses as one element of their broad educational mission, seminaries should create book centers as part of theirs. These book centers should be places to browse amid a wide selection of books, to get knowledgeable help in finding the right book, to make arrangements for a book display at a church meeting, as well

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as to buy books. They should, that is, be places where the final step implied in the term publishing -- getting ideas to the public -- is acted out.

Probably your book service is currently losing money, and all the expansion implied by these suggestions may sound as if it will create a budget liability you do not need. It is true that some capital investment will be required to start a book center. It will need attractive space that the public can find, shelving and other equipment, and a competent full-time manager. But the few schools that have been serious about their bookstores have found that after those initial costs the stores do pay their own bills, and some -- depending on their location and the size of their market area -- can earn enough to pay back their overhead costs as well. It is true that running a business is a bit complicated for a non-profit institution, but tax issues can be overcome. One option that is always open, if your bookstore becomes wildly successful, is to reorganize it as a cooperative -- like the splendid Seminary Coop bookstore at Chicago Seminary, that is owned by its customers and pays the seminary rent.

The problems in the publishing world are large, and many of them are caused by movements outside publishing that are larger still. Against the backdrop of such big forces and developments, these are some steps that theological educators can take to make the segment of publishing that so deeply affects their work healthier and more productive.



## **SUPPORTING FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP**

Jeanne P. McLean

Amidst continuing debate on the nature and purpose of theological scholarship, there is widespread agreement on its vital role in theological education. While schools may differ in their interpretations of “scholarship” and on standards for faculty research, there is uncommon consensus on the impact of scholarly work on the quality of teaching, on the advancement of theological inquiry, and on service to church and community. As scholarship supports the institutional mission, it also plays a critical role in the professional development of individual faculty and in the life of the academic community.

Changes in theological education during the past decade have challenged the strength of these convictions. New economic realities and changing needs within the church required many theological schools to expand their academic programs to serve a broader and more diverse student body. With limited institutional resources, many faculty assumed heavier teaching and advising loads and had increased responsibility for school administration and public service. While seminaries experienced these conditions in different degrees, all such changes exacerbated for faculty the usual difficulty of balancing their varied responsibilities and finding time for scholarly work in the face of more pressing demands. Clearly, if theological schools were to remain committed to faculty scholarship, they would need to take deliberate steps to develop institutional policies, programs, and financial resources for its continued support.

In 1985, the Lilly Endowment collaborated with seminary administrators and faculty to begin to address this need. Under the leadership of former Vice President Robert W. Lynn and Program Director Fred L. Hofheinz, the foundation launched an experimental grant program in Faculty Scholarship Development. The Endowment presented eighteen theological schools with a twofold challenge: to assess the needs of faculty as scholars and to develop programs within the seminaries to stimulate and support their scholarly work; and to secure funds for continued support of faculty scholarship after the grant expired. The diverse group of schools receiving this challenge were intended to serve as models for other seminaries and,

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through their experimental efforts, to afford the theological community a new understanding of faculty scholarship development.

This article aims to fulfill, in part, this broader purpose of the Faculty Scholarship Development Program by discussing outcomes of the first round of grants. Through a recent evaluation of the program, the Lilly Endowment assessed the effectiveness of its funding effort and sought to discover and disseminate what had been learned about scholarship development in theological education. By examining the experiences of the eighteen schools in this initial round, the Endowment aimed to identify successful strategies for supporting and funding faculty scholarship, and to learn from these experiments what is effective and what is possible.

Discussion of these findings begins with an overview of the grant program and a brief description of the evaluation process. Against this background, the main body of the paper summarizes the outcomes of the grant in three areas: planning, faculty scholarship development, and financial development. In describing the programs initiated with grant funds in each of these areas, I will relate the general assessment of their effectiveness by seminary faculty and administrators and, wherever possible, elucidate the specific conditions that may account for their varying degrees of success. Consistent with the nature and purpose of the evaluation, this report offers perspective on outcomes across all participating institutions, rather than individual case studies. The conclusion of the paper identifies some of the issues concerning faculty scholarship in theological education that grew out of this project and merit further consideration.

### **Overview of the Faculty Scholarship Development Grant Program**

Due to the experimental character of the program, the Lilly Endowment invited a representative group of North American theological schools to participate.<sup>1</sup> Geographically, seventeen seminaries were from throughout the United States, and one from Canada; in size, they ranged from 119 to 1,483 student FTE and from eleven to seventy-four full-time faculty.

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The denominational representation was similarly diverse: four Roman Catholic seminaries, three Presbyterian, three Interdenominational, two Baptist, two United Methodist, and one each of Episcopalian, Lutheran, Mennonite, and United Church of Canada. All schools offered two or more degrees at the master's level, and nine offered a doctorate.

The program began in March 1985, with an Endowment-sponsored conference for academic officers to explore issues relating to scholarship in theological education and to reflect on the role of academic leaders in providing institutional support for scholarly work. At this meeting the Lilly Endowment announced the three major phases of the grant program:

***Planning Phase.*** Each seminary was eligible for a grant of up to \$10,000 to provide seminary administrators and faculty the time and resources necessary to plan their scholarship and financial development programs and to prepare a proposal to the Endowment for major funding. Planning grants typically were used to assess faculty needs, to facilitate consultation within and outside the seminaries, and to pilot scholarship and financial development programs prior to their full implementation during the grant period.

Following the submission of successful grant proposals in April 1986, each school was awarded a \$70,000 grant for a three-year period from July 1, 1986 to June 30, 1989. The grant designated \$45,000 for faculty scholarship development and \$25,000 for financial development programs.

***Faculty Scholarship Development Grants.*** Seminaries received funding to develop “promising and imaginative programs” to stimulate new research efforts and to increase scholarly productivity among faculty. The Endowment urged seminaries to consider support for individual scholarship, as well as interdisciplinary and collaborative projects within and among theological schools. These efforts to encourage cooperation across disciplinary and institutional lines were intended to decrease the isolation of individual faculty and to strengthen the sense of a “community of scholars” in theological education.

Given the diversity of institutions and the variety of faculty needs, there was considerable flexibility in the type of scholarship programs eligible for funding. “Scholarship” was interpreted broadly to include traditional

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academic research and the range of scholarly work addressed to church leaders and an educated lay audience. The grant program not only invited seminaries to reflect on the meaning of theological scholarship, but on their responsibility, as theological educators, to strengthen the voice of faculty scholars both in the academy and in the church.

*Financial Development Grants.* The companion grants for financial development urged seminaries to secure financial resources so that scholarship programs could continue after the grant period. The Endowment's goal was to assist schools in their financial planning and fundraising efforts, thereby providing a permanent base of institutional support. The Endowment wanted to avoid initiating programs that could not be sustained after grant funds expired. Since establishing new programs for most schools required new institutional funds, the majority set fundraising goals for the three-year period to acquire an endowment that would provide a steady and reliable source of long-term funding.

As with the scholarship grants, the schools were encouraged to experiment with new strategies for developing financial resources. Although the Lilly Endowment was open to a variety of approaches to financial development, they did require that proposals "clearly reflect the joint planning and activity of the school's chief executive, senior development officer, and dean." In addition, they suggested that faculty become involved in raising funds to enhance their ownership of the project and to enlist the services of those committed to its ultimate success.

In its structure and objectives, the Faculty Scholarship Development Program had several distinctive strengths. At a time when the majority of faculty development programs were concerned with improvement of teaching, this program focused on faculty as scholars and recognized scholarly work as critical to the quality of teaching and the educational mission of the schools. By awarding grants to institutions rather than directly to individuals, the program invited theological schools, as academic communities, to reflect on the importance of faculty scholarship and to strengthen their institutional commitments to it in their academic and financial planning. Such corporate goals required seminary presidents, deans, development officers, faculty, and in some cases trustees, to work together toward a common objective. The explicit linking of faculty scholarship development and financial development served the practical purpose of providing for the continuation of successful programs, while

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establishing new forms of cooperation between the academic and development areas of the seminary. By design, the program had the potential not only to strengthen institutional support for faculty scholarship, but to raise consciousness and build community within the schools.

### ***Program Evaluation***

Evaluation of the grant program was conducted from December 1989 to June 1990, following completion of the pilot round in June 1989. In an effort to achieve a balanced and comprehensive view of the program, the evaluation drew upon several sources and employed a variety of research methods, including: written surveys distributed to all full-time faculty at the eighteen participating seminaries; personal interviews with faculty and administrators through site visits to ten schools and telephone interviews at the eight schools not visited; analysis of program proposals and reports; interviews with Endowment staff, and consultation with a national advisory committee. The evaluation was descriptive in nature, relying upon both quantitative and qualitative measures of the grant's effectiveness.

The written surveys distributed to seminary faculty were designed to determine the extent to which the three phases of the grant accomplished their respective purposes and to assess the impact of grant programs on faculty and their seminaries. Of the 472 surveys distributed, 320 were returned for a response rate of 68%. This substantial return, along with personal assessments acquired through extended interviews, gave a reliable indication of the perceived effectiveness of the program.

### **Institutional Planning for Scholarship Development**

Planning grants awarded to seminaries in June 1985 enabled administrators and faculty to undertake intensive institutional planning for faculty scholarship development and to prepare a proposal for major grant funding to the Lilly Endowment. While activities during the nine-month planning period varied among the participating seminaries, their effectiveness generally depended on whether the planning process was broadly consultative, with strong administrative support and extensive

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involvement of faculty. Such factors played a key role in the quality of institutional planning and in the ultimate success of the grant program.

### ***Planning Activities***

The majority of planning activities (76.8%) were related to assessing faculty needs and designing scholarship programs to address them. Most schools held corporate gatherings in the form of retreats, planning meetings, conferences, and workshops, to allow faculty and administrators an extended time for discussion. Such meetings frequently included outside consultants and examined both practical and theoretical issues relating to scholarship development. Sessions varied in their nature and purpose: some examined such fundamental issues as the role of scholarship in theological education and impediments to scholarly productivity; others were a forum for interdisciplinary discussion of theological topics; some workshops focused on developing specific skills, such as grant writing and computer usage; and others concerned planning the grant programs and reviewing draft proposals. Given the number and variety of group events, administrators at sixteen seminaries estimated faculty participation in planning activities to be 90-100 percent.

In addition to designing scholarship and financial development programs, schools also used a portion of their planning grants (23.2 %) to pilot selected programs that they were proposing for subsequent grant funding. By experimenting with programs on a limited scale during the planning phase, schools were able to make adjustments prior to their full implementation during the grant period.

### ***Planning Process***

*Administrative Leadership.* Due to the program's focus on faculty scholarship, seminary deans played the critical role in providing leadership in the planning and implementation of the grant programs.<sup>2</sup> Planning was most effective in seminaries where academic officers achieved strong faculty

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input and good cooperation with administrative colleagues. In a few cases, the participation of trustees and church leaders in events during the planning period provided additional internal and external support for the project.

By pairing scholarship and financial development efforts, the grant called upon deans and development officers to undertake joint planning of programs in their respective areas. While the many personnel changes in both offices during the program made it difficult to obtain a full assessment of this process, there is evidence that the grant provided a rare opportunity for academic and development personnel to work closely on a project.<sup>3</sup> An Endowment-sponsored meeting for the deans and development officers of the seminaries in the final stage of planning afforded extended time for discussion and coordination of their respective programs.

While the grant program strengthened ties between academic and development areas in most schools, the actual work of designing and implementing their respective programs often was coordinated but not truly cooperative. Once the project was underway, the two components of the program tended to function quite independently. The initial joint planning, however, enhanced mutual understanding of academic needs and financial development efforts.

***Role of Faculty.*** In seminaries where faculty, individually and as a group, participated in a needs assessment and were consulted on program design, there was the highest degree of faculty ownership and satisfaction with the subsequent scholarship programs. In thirteen of the eighteen participating schools, extended meetings of the faculty as a group enabled them to discuss their individual and collective needs, and to elicit ideas for scholarship programs. In more than one-third of the seminaries, planning included a day-long or overnight session to allow thorough consideration of the issues at hand. One faculty member specifically commented on how the entire faculty had been empowered by these consultations to decide how best to address their own needs. At another seminary, a faculty member noted that planning had “brought the development officer, the dean, and the faculty together for the first time,” with the result that the program was “owned by the faculty and administration more than anything before or since.”

In general, the planning process adopted by half of the participating

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seminaries proved to be most successful. Their approach combined broad consultation and discussion, with more detailed planning by a committee that had strong faculty representation. This balance was effective in fostering faculty input in needs assessment and program design, and also was efficient in enabling a small, representative group to work out the specific proposal. Faculty review of the final grant proposal became especially important to their understanding of and identification with the subsequent scholarship programs.

### ***Impact of the Planning Process***

In evaluating the planning phase, participants identified several outcomes that went beyond the expected result of developing an institutional plan for scholarship support and preparing a grant proposal.

The fact that the Lilly Endowment funded institutional planning for faculty scholarship development was, in the words of one administrator, “very affirming of the importance of serious research in theological schools.” Several noted that the focus on scholarship by an outside agency was a particularly powerful incentive to faculty to take seriously the challenge of finding new ways to support scholarly work. When asked if grants were necessary for planning, deans typically responded that the availability of funds enabled them to do it thoroughly and properly. One president said of the planning grant, “it was a luxury, but a good one!” Several deans noted that the symbolic value of the funding was more important than the specific amount. As one dean explained, “The grant made faculty more intentional about the planning process.”

In most cases, planning was a community effort. Several of those interviewed thought that even without a follow-up grant, the opportunities for collective thinking about scholarship and the collegial discussions among faculty and administrators made a lasting contribution. In many institutions, the grant served as a catalyst for increased communication on an issue vital to the academic community. The effect of this process was to heighten community consciousness of the importance of faculty scholarship and to



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establish it as a priority in the institution's academic and financial planning.

Implicit in much of the preceding discussion is the impact of the grant program on faculty morale. The attention to the professional needs of faculty by the Endowment and by the seminary, along with the availability of funds to address those needs, had a salutary effect on faculty individually and as a group. The grants were a form of moral, as well as monetary support for faculty scholarship.

One report summarized the impact of the planning process that was typical of many seminaries:

The [planning] process has been invaluable: individually, faculty members have been stimulated and encouraged to pursue original scholarship; corporately, faculty members have begun to explore innovative ways to combine disciplines which will make a significant impact upon the life of the Church; institutionally, relationships between the faculty and administration have been strengthened as we work together on this project. Through the planning process, the Lilly Endowment has initiated an important work with many important outcomes.

The planning phase proved valuable, not only as a prologue to the grant period, but in its own right for its immediate and direct benefits to faculty and the seminaries. While some of these benefits took the form of specific programs for scholarship support, many had to do with the strengthening of collegiality and community. The planning phase was more than preparatory; it served to frame the attitudes and thoughts of the academic community about faculty scholarship and to forge relationships so critical to the success of what followed, that it is arguably one of the most significant parts of the grant program.

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### **Faculty Scholarship Programs**

Each of the eighteen theological schools came into the grant program with a history of scholarship support and with a corporate sense of the importance of scholarship in theological education. The Lilly Endowment's initiative in the area of faculty scholarship development, however, encouraged administrators and faculty to examine more explicitly their understanding of "scholarship," to reflect on their expectations and standards for faculty research, and to assess the type and level of institutional support such goals required. While examination of such issues was not required by the program or undertaken with equal vigor in all schools, it did underscore the fact that new scholarship programs must be developed with attention to these broader issues and to the institutional context in which they reside. As background to the experimental programs initiated through the grant, I begin with a brief overview of the prevailing understanding of scholarship in the participating seminaries and the types of support available to faculty prior to the grant program.

### ***The Context for Scholarship Development***

Particularly during the planning phase, the grant program caused faculty members and administrators to focus on the meaning of scholarship at their institutions. Most schools had some kind of written document that described expectations for teaching, scholarship and service, and set standards for promotion and tenure (or continuing appointment). In several schools, planning for the grant prompted reexamination of the assumptions underlying these institutional policies and a renewed interest in updating and clarifying existing formulations.

Although standards for faculty scholarship varied with differences in mission, degree programs, and affiliation (university/independent), there were remarkable similarities in the understanding of scholarship among the diverse seminaries in this program. Virtually all accepted a broad notion of scholarship as including both theoretical and applied theological research that could be directed either to colleagues in the academy or to "scholarly practitioners" in the ministry and the church. All insisted that, whatever the

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type of scholarship or the audience, the work must be of high intellectual quality. Schools differed, however, in the degree of emphasis given to one type of scholarship or another, and in specific requirements for promotion and tenure. Even in schools dedicated to classical, academic research, there was recognition of the value of combining guild-oriented scholarship with work directed to church and community audiences.

This need to address faculty scholarship to the larger religious community, while preserving the high quality of traditional research, was one of the most critical issues identified through the grant program. The two journals developed with grant support represent significant efforts to address this need. Interviews with administrators and faculty in this cross-section of theological schools revealed widespread support for this broader view of the nature and purpose of theological scholarship.

*Scholarship Programs Prior to the Grant.* Although most seminaries had no formal faculty development program prior to the grant, all had some form of traditional scholarship support. Each seminary had a sabbatical program that typically provided up to one full year after a period of six years of service. The level of salary support and other terms varied with individual institutions. Seven schools also had provision for paid research leaves after three or four years that were particularly beneficial to junior faculty. In nine schools, faculty with special projects could request a reduced teaching load or partial leave between the sabbatical years. Four schools offered research stipends, though some were part of a general allocation that could be used for travel or research expenses.

All schools provided some form of support for travel to professional meetings, although both the amount of funding and the methods of distribution varied. Most commonly, each faculty member received an annual allocation ranging from \$250 to \$1,000 per year. In only one case was it necessary for a faculty member to participate formally in the conference program to obtain travel funds.

Six schools held faculty colloquia or research seminars on a regular basis. Only three schools provided teaching or research assistants to faculty. In addition to these formal programs, deans often had discretionary funds to distribute to faculty upon request and to use for informal gatherings to discuss scholarly work or to recognize faculty accomplishments.

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Within this context, the Faculty Scholarship Development Grants enabled seminaries to expand their current faculty development programs and to experiment with new forms of scholarship support.

### **Scholarship Programs Developed through the Grant**

The primary goal of the Faculty Scholarship Development Grants was to stimulate scholarly activity and to support faculty in advancing and completing theological research. In doing so, seminaries recognized the importance of meeting the needs of individual scholars, as well as encouraging collaborative research and group projects. Scholarship programs developed through the grant were of three types:

- o support for individual research; these include research and teaching assistants, individual research grants, release time and sabbatical supplements, travel grants, editorial assistance;
- o support for collaborative projects in which two or more faculty undertake joint research; these include joint publication and course development, and visiting scholar programs;
- o group projects that provide a forum for sharing scholarly interests with the larger community; these include conferences, workshops, faculty seminars and forums, group study/travel programs.

Since the seminaries were free to decide what types of scholarship programs would be most beneficial to their faculty, it is significant that support for individual research received highest priority, with the numbers of programs and levels of funding at more than twice that of collaborative and group projects combined. In examining the programs of each seminary, three schools used funds exclusively for individual research support, and fifteen schools combined individual with collaborative and group projects. Scholarship programs that focused on individual research were developed in

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all participating seminaries, were the most numerous and varied in comparison with categories, and received the highest overall level of grant funding.

Comparing these scholarship programs with those established in the seminaries before the grant, it is evident that several, particularly in the areas of sabbatical leaves and faculty travel, are augmentations of existing programs rather than entirely new efforts. Across all participating seminaries, 90 percent of scholarship programs were initiated through the grant, and 10 percent were program enhancements.

On the written surveys assessing the participants' satisfaction with the scholarship programs, the mean ratings, calculated from all survey responses to each item, indicate an "above average" rating for virtually all scholarship programs in each of the three categories. Using the rating scale, 1 Excellent, 2 Very Good, 3 Good, 4 Fair, 5 Poor, 0 Cannot Rate, the mean ratings for 85 of the 86 scholarship programs were between Very Good (1.77) and Good (2.83). This result is very favorable, with strong indication that the grant programs made a positive contribution to faculty scholarship development.

*Individual Research Programs.* Among these largely superior ratings, the programs for individual research were most highly rated as a group, with the following ranked highest within that group: travel to professional meetings, computer hardware and software, research grants, secretarial assistance, and editorial assistance. What is notable in this list is that these are basic and traditional forms of scholarship support. Taken together, however, they address two of the most critical needs identified by faculty: the need for more time for research and the need for regular contact with colleagues in the profession outside the home institution. It is significant that seminaries directed the greatest proportion of grant funds to these fundamental, but necessary forms of scholarship support, and, after three years, found them to be most effective in addressing their scholarship needs.

In both interviews and survey comments, faculty remarked on the benefits of the many types of individual research support. The fact that each program had its enthusiasts indicates the range and diversity of faculty needs,

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and explains, in part, why grant programs even in relatively small institutions contained many different forms of support for individual scholarly work.

While each program had its proponents and all were rated very favorably, many faculty found that their “conversion” to computers led to significant changes in the quality and efficiency of their writing. Computers not only proved valuable in conserving faculty time and increasing productivity, but tended to solve the persistent problem of limited secretarial assistance. Several schools reported that almost every faculty member now uses the computer, and the grant enabled them “to enter the computer age sooner and with more equity.” Most schools were eager to explore more fully the network capabilities of this technology and to link faculty to libraries, research centers, and colleagues at other institutions.

Faculty frequently noted the considerable value of the common forms of scholarship support, such as travel, research grants, release time, and sabbaticals. While the grant tended to augment existing programs and to establish others in their conventional forms, one school experimented with a variation on the sabbatical that enabled junior faculty to devote one full term in their fourth year exclusively to scholarly work. The program was designed to allow extended time for research prior to the tenure decision and to aid faculty in achieving a balance between research and teaching early in their professional lives. While some schools already had this option for faculty prior to the grant, this effort is noteworthy for its focus on the needs of junior faculty and for its value as a new variation on a common form of scholarship support.

Editorial and research assistance were established more formally and used more extensively as a result of grant funds. Editorial assistance usually was provided to the faculty by one person contracted by the seminary and trained in writing and editing. Some faculty found the help they received in conceptualizing and refining their work to be highly motivating and critical to subsequent publication. On the other hand, employing students to assist with research had mixed results. Some faculty found them “excellent” and “invaluable” in work ranging from bibliographic research to translation, while others found it difficult to recruit qualified students and keep them

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busy. In order to receive maximum benefit, several schools recognized that they needed to develop clearer guidelines and to assist faculty in identifying research-related tasks appropriate to graduate assistants.

*Collaborative and Group Projects.* While still rated positively by participants, collaborative projects involving research partnerships are rated somewhat lower overall than individual and group projects. Based on discussions with faculty, this speaks less to the considerable benefit of their outcomes than to the usual difficulties inherent in undertaking serious and sustained research with other persons. While there were numerous examples of faculty coauthoring articles or books, the grant produced three separate projects designed to foster interdisciplinary research and discussion around a common theme. In each case, a joint research project undertaken by a group of faculty resulted in a book with chapters written by the participants. These collaborative publications were an outgrowth of a shared experience, such as a faculty study group, a team taught course, and a group study/travel expedition to Israel. Faculty participants benefited by the broadening of their intellectual horizons through interdisciplinary study and the deepening of collegial bonds within the community.

Another example of collaborative research were the two Visiting Scholars Programs that invited faculty from other institutions, and often other countries, to spend an extended period in residence at the seminary. In one program, visitors worked intensively on a research project with the host faculty member, who was granted release time for research during the visit. The visiting scholar gave a public lecture, and the two faculty members team taught a special seminar related to the area of their joint research. In several instances, seminary faculty travelled to the visitor's home institution for subsequent collaboration, and occasionally the visiting scholars were invited back to the seminary on a permanent basis. This program enabled faculty to work closely with someone who shared their particular research interests and to enjoy collaborative teaching and research over an extended period. Other faculty and students were enriched by the presentations and many informal discussions throughout the residency.

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In other grants, faculty collaboration resulted in two new professional journals that enabled faculty to work together in conceptualizing the project, providing the research, and editing and managing the publication. While the journal Affirmation was produced by faculty within a single institution, Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, the New Theology Review was the cooperative effort of Catholic Theological Union and Washington Theological Union. Both journals seek to bring scholarly work of high quality to pastoral ministers and are meeting with good success. In addition to providing faculty with an outlet for publication, these collaborative projects seek to bring faculty scholarship beyond the academy to the broader church community.

These same goals of fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and promoting communication between seminary faculty and other academic and church communities characterized group projects, such as workshops and conferences. In the three cities where two seminaries were participating in the grant program, they jointly sponsored events to bring faculty together around issues of common concern. Other schools held conferences that invited trustees, church leaders, and the public to share the fruits of faculty scholarship. One series of conferences was international in scope, bringing scholars from throughout this country and abroad to the home campus.

While these larger group activities have the advantage of providing a shared experience for people with common interests, they have the disadvantage of being typically of short duration and only occasionally fostering relationships that form a basis for future cooperation. Individual and collaborative projects, by contrast, provide for sustained and focused activity that frequently has a positive effect on the advancement of scholarship and the building of a scholarly community.

### ***Program Continuation***

One measure of the success of the scholarship programs was the willingness of seminaries to continue them with institutional funding after



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the grant expired. Based on information obtained from final reports and interviews, seventeen of the eighteen schools intend to continue 62 percent of all grant programs with institutional funds. In the three program categories, the highest percentage of those continuing are collaborative programs at 81.8 percent, compared to 65 percent of individual research programs, and 43.7 percent of group programs. These plans speak well, not only of the effectiveness of particular experimental efforts, but of the strengthened institutional commitments to faculty scholarship. Of the eighty-six scholarship programs developed through the grant, the future of sixteen programs is unknown. This uncertainty generally is due to pending budget decisions rather than to lack of confidence in their future benefits.

### ***Outcomes of the Scholarship Programs***

Another indicator of the success of the scholarship programs is the testimony of faculty who were direct beneficiaries, and of seminary administrators who witnessed the effect of these programs on individual faculty and the community. While the preceding discussion has referred to some of these outcomes, I would like now to review the survey ratings and interview findings for a more complete appraisal of the impact of the grant programs. The survey distributed to faculty in the participating seminaries invited them not only to evaluate the individual scholarship programs but to assess their overall impact on the faculty and the seminary. The eight items listed below state principal outcomes of the grant based on the program goals and give a general indication of the program's success in achieving these

o b j e c t i v e s .

**Table 1. Impact of Scholarship Programs**

	Rating
Increasing scholarly productivity	2.07
Stimulating new research efforts	2.31
Strengthening the sense of intellectual community	2.46
Strengthening institutional standards for faculty research	2.51
Increasing cooperation between seminary faculty and colleagues outside	2.67
Increasing collaboration on scholarly projects	2.68
Improving courses and teaching methods	2.71
Revising institutional policies and practices to facilitate research institution	2.94

Rating scale: 1 Excellent 2 Very Good 3 Good 4 Fair  
5 Poor 0 Cannot Rate

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Mean ratings on all items are favorable, ranging between Very Good and Good on the rating scale. The three items receiving the highest ratings were the primary goals of the grant program: increasing scholarly productivity, stimulating new research efforts, and strengthening the sense of intellectual community. While the ratings varied for individual schools, these are heartening results in terms of the participants' overall assessment of the grant's success.

In addition to rating specific program goals, participants identified the following major outcomes of the scholarship development effort:

*Importance of Scholarship.* All eighteen theological schools noted that the grant initiative heightened consciousness of the importance of faculty scholarship among all constituencies within the seminary and, in

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doing so, had a positive effect on faculty morale. Several administrators commented that scholarship now was explicitly part of the institutional agenda, with a consequent strengthening of moral and financial support. In many institutions, board members, presidents, academic administrators, development officers, faculty, and students acknowledged a new awareness of the centrality of scholarship in theological education as a result of the grant program.

*Increase in Scholarly Productivity.* Seventeen of the eighteen theological schools explicitly noted that an increase in scholarly productivity was one of the most significant outcomes of the grant programs. Faculty and administrators alike commented on the fact that scholarship support tended to stimulate new research efforts and to encourage completion of work in progress on both individual and collaborative projects. Several acknowledged both qualitative and quantitative changes in faculty work as a result of increased support. Most indicated that programs reached a broad range of faculty at various stages of their professional lives, though several felt that junior faculty particularly benefited from encouragement and support for research at a formative stage in their academic careers.

As the title of the grant program suggests, scholarship is a “developmental activity” whose results are manifest gradually over time. Although at the conclusion of the grant only a few seminaries had specific data to document the increase in books and articles published or papers presented, the majority confirmed that scholarly work begun and completed during the grant period had “increased noticeably.” Specific accounts of such accomplishments still would not reveal the projects seeded by the grant and the important efforts underway. While seminaries varied in the level of faculty productivity prior to the grant, faculty and administrators in a broad cross-section of institutions attributed increased scholarly activity to the grant program. In one seminary, an unprecedented 50 percent of the faculty were under contract for books; another noted that “everyone had a book or article in progress.” A common observation was that the grant had caused “a steady stream of scholarship,” a regular rhythm of scholarly work among a larger group of faculty.

*Collaboration and Community.* As noted in the earlier discussion, several schools designed programs to encourage collaborative research projects and to build community. The examples cited above give clear indication that faculty consistently benefitted from the interdisciplinary nature of these efforts, from the collegial exchanges that decreased the

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isolation of individual scholars, and from the enrichment resulting from joint research, team-teaching, and other collaborative projects. In addition to strengthening the bonds among faculty members within a single institution, the grant also supported consultants, visiting scholars, conferences and workshops that brought faculty together across disciplines and institutions. In several instances, these occasions included participation of church leaders, lay church members, and the community. Faculty frequently spoke of the broadening of intellectual horizons and advancement of their own thinking that resulted from these events.

*Other Outcomes.* Among the many benefits faculty mentioned in the survey and personal interviews, two deserve brief attention here. First is the impact of scholarly work on teaching. For many faculty, research and teaching are mutually supportive, even inseparable parts of their professional lives. Consequently, becoming more active and productive scholars directly resulted in the enrichment of course content and the improvement in teaching methods. Second is the impact of scholarship development on other institutional policies and programs. While many schools during the planning period had extensive discussion of institutional standards for scholarship, two seminaries reported significant progress in clarifying expectations. Another school sponsored an extensive study of faculty workload and developed recommendations for changes that would allow more time for research. At one seminary, the job of the dean was redefined to include responsibility for faculty development, and a formal program under the leadership of the dean will be established in the future.

The most significant conclusion to emerge from this broad review of scholarship programs is that their success is not found exclusively in the design or promise of particular grant initiatives. Individual programs owe their effectiveness in addressing faculty needs and achieving the goals of the grant to the institutional context in which they were developed. These experiments have shown that grant programs were most successful in stimulating and supporting faculty scholarship when they were based on a

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thorough assessment of faculty needs and were developed with broad faculty input during the planning phase. These processes, in turn, generally resulted from academic leadership that empowered faculty to play a significant role in designing the scholarship programs. *If these theological schools are truly to serve as models for other seminaries, one must focus not on the appeal of specific program initiatives, but on the context in which they were developed.* Programs were not effective in and of themselves, but because they were the right programs in the right place at the right time. And it was the process of consulting, planning, discussing, and cooperatively developing these programs within the seminary community that was key to their success.

### **Financial Development Grants**

Financial Development Grants were awarded to each of the eighteen seminaries to secure the financial resources necessary to support faculty scholarship programs after grant funding ceased. Scholarship development required financial development. By design, the grant program linked these two initiatives, which were related in purpose, planned jointly, and undertaken simultaneously during the three-year grant period. Development grants assisted schools in their financial planning and fundraising efforts, with the goal of providing for long-term scholarship support and learning effective methods of raising funds for faculty development.

As with the scholarship development grants, each seminary had the freedom to assess its needs and to direct funds to programs and activities that would best meet its objectives. Seminaries utilized grant support in two principal ways: 1) to hire additional development personnel, such as fundraisers, prospect researchers, and grants officers, to focus on the scholarship project or to free existing staff to do so; and 2) to sponsor fundraising events, workshops, travel, and publications relating to faculty scholarship.

Approximately 52 percent of total grant funds were dedicated to personnel and 48 percent to a variety of non-personnel items. In the

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personnel category, the grant primarily supported additional staff for direct fundraising and for contact with foundations, corporations, and other external agencies. In the non-personnel category, the highest priorities were fundraising events and materials and publicity related to fundraising.

### ***Development Personnel and Programs***

Many theological schools reported that their financial development operations had “come of age” only in the last decade. Having sufficient staff and resources to support fundamental development research, acquisition of materials and data, grant writing, major fundraising and public relations is a continual challenge in an increasingly competitive market. New financial development initiatives, such as faculty scholarship support, generally require additional personnel.

*Personnel.* The most common uses of grant funds were for fundraisers, prospect researchers and grants officers, all of whom were initially part-time and focused on some aspect of the scholarship project. The individuals hired to do fundraising typically had extensive prior association with the seminary and/or the church, and sufficient background and contacts to make their initiatives productive. Prospect researchers usually assisted the director of development by conducting research on individual donors, foundations, or corporations interested in supporting theological education.

The duties of grants officers tended to be broader and more varied, and to have a more direct impact on the faculty. Responsibilities usually included: conducting research on foundations and corporations as sources of grant funding, developing institutional grant proposals to external agencies, providing information to faculty on grant opportunities, advising faculty on appropriate funding sources, and working with them individually to prepare grant proposals. As one dean observed, “faculty feel affirmed and supported by these consultations” and have developed a new “can do” attitude in seeking outside funding.

One grants officer published a newsletter that was distributed nationally to the deans and development officers of ATS member schools,

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and conducted workshops and grants seminars across the country to assist theological schools and faculty in seeking competitive grants. The outstanding success of these efforts has led to serious consideration of establishing a national grants office for North American seminaries. Such an office would provide a central database of information on funding sources, would work with foundations and corporations to identify and address the needs of theological schools, and could be a center for grants workshops and seminars for theological educators. There clearly is need to avoid duplication of these efforts by individual institutions, and to provide central coordination of information and resources.

*Programs.* While several of the items in the non-personnel category are standard activities and needs associated with financial development, others represent somewhat innovative approaches adapted to the special circumstances of theological schools.

Six seminaries developed a brochure, booklet, or magazine featuring the research interests and scholarly accomplishments of the faculty. While these publications varied in scope and method of presentation, they shared a common purpose: to acquaint the seminary community and external publics with faculty scholarship, and to heighten awareness of its role and importance in theological education. Such publications served to enhance the visibility of faculty as scholars and to inform readers of their contributions to the academy, the church, and the community. While this publicity had the indirect benefit of acquainting faculty with the work of their colleagues and aiding in student recruitment, its primary purpose was to interest prospective individual and corporate donors in supporting faculty scholarship.

The videotapes developed with grant funds had a similar purpose but were conceived in a different format. Although one tape became a general public relations piece for the seminary without a particular focus on faculty scholarship, the other concentrated solely on faculty and was developed to bring the message of their faith and their vocation as theological educators to church ministers and congregations. The project was successful in strengthening communication between the seminary and the church, and

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enhancing understanding of the purpose of theological education and research through the personal testimony of faculty.

### ***Fundraising Goals and Methods***

Since for most seminaries, new faculty scholarship programs required the acquisition of new institutional funds, the majority of schools set for themselves a fundraising goal for the grant period. In setting their original goals, eleven schools envisioned raising endowment funds (from \$200,000 to \$600,000), the annual interest from which would support faculty scholarship at approximately the grant level of \$15,000 per year. The seven schools with more modest goals (under \$200,000) estimated what they could realistically hope to raise in a three-year period without aiming to match the original grant allocation. Those who expressed their goals in yearly amounts were envisioning continued fundraising on an annual basis rather than an endowed scholarship fund.

The most direct and measurable outcome of the grant was the more than \$2.4 million raised by the seminaries and dedicated to faculty scholarship. Nine of the eighteen schools raised over \$100,000 each during the grant period. While the original fundraising goal for all seminaries was \$3.3 million, the lesser amount actually raised still represents a significant and substantial increase in faculty scholarship support.

Twelve schools plan to continue fundraising for faculty scholarship after the grant period. While several are striving to meet their original goals, three are continuing to build scholarship funds even though their goals were met or exceeded during the grant period. Among the six schools with no immediate plans, some have met their goals and satisfied their current needs, and others plan to secure funds annually from other sources.

Development officers utilized conventional fundraising methods in seeking scholarship support. Several took multiple approaches, including contact with foundations and corporations, solicitation in affiliated congregations, and cultivation of individual donors (alumni/ae, ministers,



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church members). Of these funding sources, foundations and corporations generally were least productive relative to the time invested. Several schools spent considerable effort in identifying corporate prospects, only to experience frustration with the limited pool of good sources and the uncertain and uneven results of grant applications. Those most successful in securing gifts and grants worked with regional or church-related foundations. The seminary with the highest percentage of annual foundation support was freestanding and non-denominational, and, as such, had access to a wider range of external agencies.

Solicitation of individual donors proved to be the single most effective method of fundraising for most seminaries. Efforts were most successful with board members and friends of the seminary whose own background and interests enabled them to appreciate the value of theological research.

*Role of Faculty.* Since one objective of the grant was to increase understanding and cooperation between the academic and development areas of the seminary, the Lilly Endowment encouraged deans and faculty to participate in the fundraising process. By doing so, they would acquire a better understanding of the challenges faced by development staff and would have greater ownership of the scholarship program.

One notable example of this approach is a seminary where the dean and four faculty members were almost entirely responsible for raising substantial endowment funds. The board of trustees had agreed that if the faculty raised new funds for any worthy purpose (e.g., student scholarships, capital improvements, international studies), the board would match those contributions with funds for faculty development.

Other seminaries, however, tried to involve faculty in fundraising with limited success. The president and dean of one seminary considered it a “demanding process.” They discovered that most faculty lack the interest, time, and specific training to be effective fundraisers. A development officer at another institution observed that “it is a rare academic who is good at fundraising.” In general, the most effective contributions of faculty were in discussing their scholarship and teaching with prospective donors, while the president and development officer managed other aspects of solicitation.

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*Role of Board Members.* Boards of trustees are critical to financial planning and fundraising in theological institutions. Seven of the eighteen seminaries explicitly mentioned significant contributions by board members that included major personal gifts, as well as special initiatives by the entire board to provide challenge grants and matching funds for scholarship support. Several noted that board members themselves became more aware of the need for increased institutional funding for scholarship and established it as an institutional priority. Two schools that began major capital campaigns toward the end of the grant period specifically designated “faculty enrichment” and “faculty scholarship” as funding priorities. Some administrators believe that such substantial long-term commitments would not have been possible without the influence of the Lilly Endowment grants.

### **Conclusion**

The positive outcomes of the Faculty Scholarship Development Grant Program confirm the timeliness of the focus on faculty scholarship and the readiness of theological schools to address the need for new forms of programmatic and financial support. Activities during the grant period, however, tell only part of the story. A final assessment of program initiatives lies somewhere in the future, when the consequences for scholarly productivity and sustained institutional commitments to scholarship development are more fully known.

The ability of individual faculty and the schools to achieve these goals depends, in turn, on a complex set of conditions within and outside of theological education. In focusing its resources on the institutional context, the Lilly Endowment sought to strengthen faculty scholarship by strengthening the base of programmatic and financial support within the seminaries. Through this approach, the Endowment acknowledged that scholarship development, to be effective, must be consistent with institutional mission and supported by the policies, practices, and priorities within theological schools.

While the personal motivation and commitment of faculty are essential to the pursuit of scholarly work, there are several factors within

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theological institutions that serve to stimulate or discourage individual scholars. One example is faculty workload and the allocation of faculty time, which establish the relative importance of professional responsibilities. Institutional expectations for teaching, advising, administrative work, scholarship and service, whether implied or explicitly stated, influence the personal priorities of faculty. A common problem throughout higher education has been the disjunction between the actual demands upon faculty in their daily work and the standards for research employed at the time of promotion and tenure. The task facing theological schools committed to faculty scholarship is not simply to establish new scholarship programs, but to achieve consistency between academic policy and institutional practices, and to coordinate both with the broader goals of faculty development.

In light of the importance of institutional context and the necessity of a multi-faceted, wholistic approach to scholarship development, strong and consistent academic leadership is critical. Evaluation of the Endowment's Scholarship Development Program in eighteen theological schools revealed a high rate of turnover in key administrative positions during the four-year period of the grant (1985-1989). Among academic officers, there was turnover of fifteen deans in eight schools. Similarly, there were twelve changes in development officers in nine schools since 1985.<sup>4</sup> One seminary had three different deans and two different development officers during the grant period. If the rate of administrative change in this representative group of schools is characteristic of seminaries generally, then the theological community faces important questions about the recruitment and retention of its leaders. The success of faculty scholarship development depends, in large part, upon the consistent and coherent leadership required to create an environment in which academic policies and planning support it.

In addition to institutional context, conditions outside of theological schools have a significant impact on faculty scholarship. Generally, faculty are encouraged to pursue scholarly work, not only for its intrinsic merit and positive effects on teaching, but because it contributes to the discourse of the broader theological community. Whether scholarship addresses colleagues in the academy, practicing ministers, lay church members, or a broad and

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inclusive audience, it often depends on the support of outside agencies for its completion and communication. In undertaking major projects, faculty who seek external funding to supplement institutional resources often experience difficulty in identifying corporations, foundations, and federal agencies that support theological research.

Faculty encounter similar obstacles in disseminating the results of their work. While forums for oral presentations are reasonably accessible to scholars both in academic and church communities, publication can be more problematic. One reason is that, although the number of periodicals and publishing houses interested in theological writing has never been large, in recent years the steady disappearance of some traditional sources and the market-oriented philosophy adopted by others has created an escalating crisis. Whatever the value of scholarly work within theological institutions, the diminishing opportunities for publication discourage efforts to promote scholarly activity and productivity among faculty. Issues of the nature, purpose, and relevance of theological research require clarification, not only for the benefit of the theological community, but for the benefit of its larger public on which scholarship support depends.

As faculty scholarship development proceeds and gains momentum within theological schools, there is need for serious attention to the broader context in which these initiatives are undertaken. Within the seminaries, the challenge is not only to establish scholarship development programs and increase institutional funding, but, through strong academic leadership, to develop internal policies and practices consistent with these goals. Conditions external to theological institutions are equally important. Without a supportive environment in which quality theological research can be adequately funded and published, both the rationale and motivation for scholarly work may seriously diminish.

These significant related issues are implicit in the scholarship development effort. Among the many outcomes of the grant program, the most important ultimately may be that it heightened consciousness of the range and complexity of issues relating to scholarship development and called upon the theological community to give them serious and immediate attention.

**FOOTNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>. Participants were: Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Catholic Theological Union of Chicago, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Candler School of Theology at Emory University, General Theological Seminary, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Pacific School of Religion, Princeton Theological Seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, Emmanuel College of Victoria University at Toronto, Washington Theological Union, Weston School of Theology, Yale University School of Divinity.

<sup>2</sup>. Joseph C. Hough delivered an address entitled “The Dean’s Responsibility for Faculty Research” at the opening conference of the Faculty Scholarship Development Program in March 1985, that was later published in Theological Education Vol. XXIV (Autumn 1987): pp. 102-114. The article includes reflection on the role of academic officers and practical suggestions concerning scholarship support. A major part of the Autumn 1987 issue of Theological Education is dedicated to scholarship issues.

Methods for improving faculty scholarship also are discussed in John W. Creswell, et al. The Academic Department Chairperson’s Handbook (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990).

<sup>3</sup>. Specific information on administrative changes during the grant period is provided in the concluding section of this paper.

<sup>4</sup>. Since academic and financial officers directed their respective components of the grant program, information was recorded on those offices only. A comparable study of seminary presidents would be relevant and informative here.

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