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Continuing the Conversation

Theological Education invites responses, of up to 1,500 words, to articles published in the journal in order to foster conversation among its readers. Reader responses may be emailed to the managing editor at merrill@ats.edu. Responses are published at the discretion of the editors and may be edited for length.

Editor's Introduction

Growing in Grace and Age and Wisdom . . .
Celebrating Forty Years of TE

Jeremiah J. McCarthy

As I write these words, the earth is still at rest awaiting spring, and a new Lenten season enfolds the community of theological schools. Forty days of immersion into the Savior's Paschal Mystery provide an apt context for a reflection on forty years of *Theological Education*. Since its inception in 1964, the mission of the journal has been to provide a forum for scholarly reflection on the task of theological education and to serve as an intellectual archive of the work of The Association of Theological Schools. The journal is an eloquent witness to a dynamic and engaging history. Over these forty years, the Association has, like the Savior, grown in "grace and age and wisdom" (Luke 2: 52). New members have expanded the constituency of ATS making it, in my opinion at least, the most vibrant expression of ecumenism in the church. The context of theological education has also witnessed change and development. Among these initiatives reflected in the pages of the journal are the following: new standards of accreditation; the challenge and blessing of diversity in race, ethnicity, and gender; creation of new networks for leadership education and development of institutional resources; new initiatives to strengthen the evaluation of educational effectiveness; the quality of thought that has guided twenty biennial meetings of the Association over this time frame; and others no less powerful in their significance and implications for the work of the Association. How does one do justice to such an impressive body of work, and how does one celebrate and give thanks for such gifts as the traditions represented by the member schools require us to do?

An editor faces such a challenge with no small amount of trepidation. Which articles should be singled out? In highlighting some, does one slight other equally excellent offerings? Like a parent who is asked by a child, which child is the favorite, wise parents know that the answer is that each is loved equally and distinctively. Hence, Nancy Merrill and I have made available to you, dear reader, an index that lists the focus of each issue since the journal's inception. Nonetheless, I noticed in my review of the articles and the biennial meeting themes from this biblical epoch of forty years, certain recurring concerns and issues. These issues are enduring and important. They are, if you will, inherent in the DNA of the Association, constitutive of its perennial struggle to understand deeply and truly the meaning of theological education and the purpose of the theological school.

Aquinas notes that beauty is a characteristic of that which is true and good. Scientists and mathematicians instinctively recognize this feature in their discoveries. Crick and Watson's elegant model of the DNA molecule, the famed double helix, is a stunning example. The patterned grace of the model with its spiraling strands suggests a metaphor for celebrating the journal's fortieth anniversary.

The dynamic rhythms of the double helix hold the building blocks of life in an ordered symmetry, enabling complex and diverse forms and structures to emerge. Significant themes in theological education are reflected in the journal that appear and reappear in different configurations and with enriched textures as befits the intellectual and spiritual DNA of ATS. This DNA is captured in the standards of accreditation that have been nourished and strengthened by the work of the Association to wrestle with the qualities of excellence in theological education to prepare leadership for the mission of the churches served by the member schools. What might we glean by examining the double helix of issues captured in the journal that form the DNA of the Association? One fruitful venue for this reflection comes from the themes that have formed the agenda of the ATS biennial gatherings. Another is to observe thematic concerns that emerge from a consideration of the four decades of literature in the journal.

A review of the various themes that have shaped the biennial meetings of the Association reflects a distinctive feature of the Association's DNA, namely its dialogical character. Theological education is a dynamic reality that seeks to engage multiple contexts and changing circumstances. Some examples testify to this supple vitality: "The Essential and the Peripheral in Theological Education" (1970), "Readiness for Ministry in a Pluralistic Setting" (1976), "Discerning Old and New Imperatives in Theological Education" (1982), "Global Challenges and Perspectives" (1986), "The Good Theological School" (1994), "Continuity and Change: The Contexts of Leadership in Theological Schools" (2000), "Context and Culture: The Public Character of Theological Schools" (2002).

Each of the decades in the biblical epoch of forty years of the journal provides yet another pattern of dialogue—ongoing concerns about the internal structure of theological education—its curricular challenges; the shape of theological discourse; teaching and learning; resources (human, physical, administrative, technical, educational-library); leadership and governance; and the external relationships, constituencies, and partnerships that challenge established paradigms of the enterprise of theological education. By way of illustration, several motifs emerge—gifts and challenges of welcoming diversity in race, ethnicity, gender; equipping students with skills for ministry; addressing the needs and expectations of the churches; assessing the effectiveness and quality of theological education; basic issues in theological education; reconceptualizing the purpose and work of theological schools; globalization; healing the theory/praxis fissure in theological education; and the public character of theological schools. In addition, specialized issues of the journal addressing theological libraries, chief academic officers, distance education and educational technology, and the seminary presidency also emerged.

As with the biennial themes, the themes in the journal show that these concerns are never resolved once and for all. Rather, like any vital, living organism, its basic structure remains intact but achieves what biologists call "hybrid vigor" by adapting to new and changing contexts. Such is the double helix of theological education. It is a pleasure to celebrate forty years of engage-

ment, passion, and energy in the pages of the journal. They are a mirror image of the energy and vitality of the member schools.

In this issue, I am pleased to report three important research studies conducted as part of the Character and Assessment of Learning for Religious Vocation project. Sr. Katarina Schuth and Fred Maples interviewed Roman Catholic seminary students and analyzed the impact of particular theological and ecclesial commitments upon student learning. In a parallel study of students in mainline Protestant and Evangelical seminaries, Yau Man Siew and Gary Peluso-Verdend provide interesting commentary on the implications for teaching and learning as well as the challenges of formation for the newer cohorts of students seeking theological education. Gordon Smith, Jimmy Dukes, and Michael Dash complete this palette of research with a review of denominational and congregational studies with rich insights for seminaries regarding the expectations of the churches for well-educated pastors and servant-leaders.

It is also a pleasure to make available the opening address to the Luce Consultation on Theological Scholarship, convened in Pittsburgh, May 2, 2003, by Nicholas Wolterstorff of Yale Divinity School. Dr. Wolterstorff's reflections on the need for "engaged" theology, that is, scholarship that is attentive to the formational needs of the church, set the stage for a wide-ranging and fruitful conversation. Insights were both penetrating and plentiful, and it was impossible to distill any single, overarching conclusion. Also included in this issue is the summary of the conversation at the Luce Consultation, and I think readers will find in it a treasure trove of passionate convictions and suggestions for the future of theological scholarship in our schools. Publishing these reflections will, I hope, spawn further reflections from our readership, and I look forward to receiving them.

In our open forum, Kathryn Mapes of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary provides a thoughtful and illuminating discussion of the results of recent research conducted with her colleague, Dean Dianne Reistroffer, on the changing student demographics in ATS member seminaries, and the implications for seminary leaders to attend to their gifts and challenges. The open forum also includes an essay by Steve Delamarter and Daniel Brunner on the impact of technology on the pedagogical design and delivery of theological education. In addition to a discussion about the effectiveness of these new delivery systems, the authors offer a critique of the current Standard 10 on multiple locations and distance education. In order to further conversation on this issue, Charles Willard, secretary to the Commission on Accrediting, has contributed a rejoinder to Delamarter and Brunner. I think the combined pieces help to sharpen our understanding of these issues and I invite reader response.

This fortieth anniversary issue is a milestone for the journal and for ATS. It is an occasion for profound gratitude, remembrance, and renewed dedication. There is a lively spirit that animates these volumes of TE. I find in these pages a grace-filled passion for excellence in theological education. As you ponder its elegant DNA, I hope that you will experience, as I have, an affirmation of the wondrous work of theological education that is our common calling.

Snapshot of the Association over the Journal's Forty Years

Below is a statistical snapshot of the Association over the four decades of publication of *Theological Education*. Because the Association began annual data collection and publication of the *Fact Book on Theological Education* in 1969, data prior to that time are not readily available from a single source. The data below, however, do provide a picture of the growth in enrollment and selected student and faculty demographics. The growth in the number of member schools between 1964 and 1974 reflects in large measure the entrance of Roman Catholic schools following the Second Vatican Council and an influx shortly thereafter of Evangelical Protestant schools. The decline in the percentage of MDiv enrollment may be attributable to the proliferation of degree program offerings during the 1980s. The percentage of women faculty has not kept pace with the number of women students. Racial/ethnic diversity among the student bodies and faculties over the forty years has increased with Hispanics being the slowest growing racial/ethnic group. These data inform and help to shape the work of the Association.

	1964	1974	1984	1994	2004
Number of schools	127	191	197	226	251
Total enrollment	21,205	36,830	56,466	65,182	80,140
% Men		86%	75%	69%	64%
% Women		14%	25%	31%	36%
Total MDiv		24,858	28,880	27,640	34,096
% MDiv of full degree enrollment		67%	55%	50%	50%
% Men		92%	82%	73%	69%
% Women		14%	18%	27%	31%
Racial/ethnic students					
% Black		3%	5%	9%	13%
% Asian		n/a	2%	7%	8%
% Hispanic		1%	2%	3%	4%
% Native American		n/a	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%
% White		95%	90%	81%	75%
Total faculty		2,237	2,518	2,817	3,608
% Men		96%	89%	78%	77%
% Women		4%	11%	22%	23%
Racial/ethnic faculty					
% Racial/ethnic		n/a	4%	10%	14%

Character and Assessment of Learning for Religious Vocation: Interview Study of Roman Catholic Students and Faculty

Frederic Maples, Loyola Renewal Center
Katarina Schuth, Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity

ABSTRACT: This interview study with nearly fifty seminary students and fifty faculty members examines how selected characteristics of students contribute to or detract from the attainment of educational goals during theological studies. Our hypothesis was that the religious backgrounds of students, especially their understanding of the nature of authority and their personal religious experiences, would impact how and what they would learn about theology and ministry. We found that their religious backgrounds powerfully shape their studies and their notions of ministry.

The purpose of the interview study of seminary students and faculty was specified in the proposal for the ATS project on "The Character and Assessment of Learning for Religious Vocation." It was intended to "identify themes from these interviews that have the potential to inform understanding about the ways in which selected characteristics of students contribute to or detract from the attainment of the educational goals of theological degree programs." We conducted the interviews with nearly fifty students and as many faculty in five seminaries, four in widespread parts of the United States and one in Canada. We also spoke with academic deans and president/rectors to gain an overview of the situation of these schools.

The identification of themes, an appropriately limited goal given the scope of the interview study, was both complicated and aided by the diverse cultures among the five schools. At one school the academic backgrounds of the students were especially rich and seemed to be related to flexible attitudes, especially concerning issues of authority. In another seminary, the human development program for students effectively enhanced positive attitudes toward faculty and future ministry. That program also gave evidence of changing student attitudes over time regarding issues of freedom and authority, toward more open and nuanced positions. In a third seminary, a vocal group of seminarians with negative attitudes toward some faculty members perpetuated criticism, in particular of priests, for failing to model and encourage strong "priestly identity." The other two seminaries, and a third already mentioned above, enrolled a fairly large proportion of seminarians from countries other than the United States or

Canada. In those schools, faculty found themselves making great efforts to reach students by using various cultural examples in their teaching, but language barriers considerably affected the learning process. These distinguishing elements required faculty to adapt the learning and teaching environment in order to reach these students. Their lack of connection with American culture was particularly troubling for those students who intend to minister in North America.

Adding richness to the results were other forms of diversity among the forty-eight students we interviewed. We asked the president/rector and dean to select our interviewees randomly from among two groups, roughly identified as those with a more traditional approach to their faith, their studies, and life in general and those with a more progressive approach. In Roman Catholic terms, this also included the degree of acceptance of and appreciation for Vatican II theology. We divided the student interviews between us, talking with each of the students individually for about an hour. Almost all of them were seminarians preparing for priesthood.

In addition to the students at each of these schools, we jointly interviewed forty-five faculty members, mostly in group settings, and the presidents/rectors and academic deans separately. Generally, faculty and administrators found their ministry satisfying and many of their students eager to prepare for a life of ministry. Nonetheless, every faculty group expressed concern about students who demonstrate fear-based ideological views and emotional rigidity, resistance to learning, and suspicion toward faculty motives and orthodoxy. In every case, faculty articulated wise and skillful practices they used as they gradually developed ways of teaching so that the students would be free to learn what will be needed to meet the ministerial leadership requirements in the Church in the future. Given the immense diversity found among Roman Catholic congregants in the United States and Canada, a goal of most faculties is to prepare students who will be open to persons with diverse viewpoints and flexible in ministering to them.

In presenting our findings, we have used two approaches based on our individual expertise and on the nature of the material we were interpreting: one is primarily psychological and the other is more sociological. In the first section, Frederic Maples uses case studies to describe vividly the wide spectrum of beliefs among students about the nature of authority and its role in theological education. He also explores the importance of religious experience in the backgrounds of students as they continue during studies to shape their attitudes toward theology and ministry. Katarina Schuth examines the learning styles of students, their preferred methods, and factors that maximize learning or detract from it. Then she seeks to interpret how the characteristics of students and their learning experiences contribute to student concepts of ministry and ministerial leadership. We conclude each of these sections by drawing out a series of points about what faculty can learn from the descriptions and analysis of each question. In the final section of the report, we summarize the major points faculty made in

describing what they believe to be the underlying concerns of students who resist learning any theology that differs from their understandings before they entered seminary. We also asked faculty to articulate successful approaches they have used in teaching students with various backgrounds and ideas about ministerial leadership.

Part I. Report on and analysis of information about the students' beliefs, theological commitments, and worldviews that have an influence on the attainment of the goals of the theological curriculum

Religious authority and religious experience:
Two approaches to the data

At a meeting of priests in a large archdiocese in the summer of 2003, a young priest described the difference between two generations of priests. For priests now in their fifties and older, priesthood is experienced in terms of the Church before and after the Second Vatican Council. For younger priests, it is the Church before and after the papacy of John Paul II.

Our written questionnaire asked seminarians to name their principal religious and political heroes. By an overwhelming number, almost all of them named Pope John Paul II, sometimes under both the religious and the political categories. Only one or two out of the forty-eight mentioned Pope John XXIII. Almost by itself, this dramatic preference testifies to the generational difference described by the young priest at the priests' meeting.

The attitudes of many of these contemporary seminarians are very different from those prevalent when their interviewers were in training when Vatican II was still in session. During the interviews with some seminarians we often experienced firsthand the issues faculty were likely to bring up during their group interviews: ideological and emotional rigidity, black and white thinking, authoritarian attitudes, resistance to learning, and suspicion of faculty orthodoxy. The ATS grant proposal similarly mentions faculty perceptions: "students ... entering seminary with beliefs, world views, or forms of emotional rigidity that complicate the efforts of theological educators."

I [Frederic Maples] will explore four case studies of seminarians concerning these topics, making comparisons among the students. These cases center on issues of authority and religious experience. Four additional cases highlight tendencies toward development and greater openness to learning as the result of seminary experience. Then a final section summarizes the outcomes of the case analysis.

What seems overarching in the attitudes of these current Roman Catholic seminarians is their articulated relationship to religious or Church authority. The issue concerns how seminarians locate religious authority and to what extent or in what way they retain for themselves a sense of having authority, that is, the

right and power to think and judge independently. Within the purview of this topic lie other issues: the role of conscience and the possible tension between personal integrity and loyalty to legitimate Church authority and also the way seminarians understand their religious experience and integrate it into their personal development.

At one end of the spectrum described by the responses of these seminarians are those men for whom religious authority seems to exist entirely outside themselves. They seem to retain no independent authority of their own, so their only possible response to an external authority is complete obedience. One theme that emerges in the responses of these men is their consistent denial of any ongoing struggle with any significant Church teaching or discipline. Those who do admit to some past struggles deem them to be resolved in favor of what they understand to be the Church's position. If they have criticisms of particular people in authority, certain bishops for example, it comes out of the sense that these authorities are themselves not clear enough on the teaching of still higher authority. If they seem to disagree with a position of the Pope as highest authority, for example the Pope's position on the United States' invasion of Iraq, it is based on a particular way of reasoning about what they understand the Pope to be saying and what the Pope demands of them. They would never claim to disagree with the Pope, and they would not see themselves as being "cafeteria Catholics" picking and choosing among the teachings of the Church.

The other pole of the spectrum is not an opposite pole. Generally, all of the seminarians in this study manifest deep respect and a positive attitude toward Church authority. But some of them retain for themselves a sense of real personal authority, a right and power to think for themselves and to be critical. These seminarians are more likely, not surprisingly, to manifest some tension with certain Church teachings or disciplines.

There is a middle group, though boundaries among the three groups cannot be precisely drawn. The middle group may be composed of persons who have tended toward placing all authority externally. As one of these seminarians commented during his interview, "I tend to default to the Church position." These seminarians seem to be changing, becoming more open to tensions such as the tension between loyalty and right to inquire. Their movement in this direction seems to come out of their pastoral work and other experiences of personal growth. These experiences and the empathy they provoke for themselves and others create new loyalties that make it difficult to support black and white thinking or the projection of personal authority. This middle group has its own special importance. It suggests some of the ways students change and learn.

Of course, some seminarians are more articulate and reflective about their positions or ideologies than are others. My way of proceeding here is to take note of trends in the responses to questions but use the clear articulations of a few to interpret these trends. This method may provide directions for further research, or if the interpretation "rings bells" for faculty and administrators, it may provide direction now for methods of teaching and formation.

Example of an authoritarian type

Ben, one of the most authoritarian seminarians interviewed, was also quite articulate about his position. Two key themes, which identify him on the authoritarian side, are his choice of heroes and his experience of struggle with Church doctrine. His public heroes are Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Ratzinger, and Ronald Reagan. Far more telling is that he reports never really having struggled with any doctrine of the Church. He does criticize "some bishops" for taking the Pope's criticism of capitalism and of the death penalty too far. Like some well-known conservative Catholic authors, he tends to defend both capitalism and the death penalty, asserting that the Church ultimately does not absolutely condemn them. His loyalty is to the highest authority, who for him is the Pope. Insofar as he perceives the Church's highest authorities to allow some freedom of opinion in certain areas (such as the Pope's opposition to the Iraq invasion and the death penalty), he can take a position against lesser Church authorities who seem to favor the Pope's position, but who do not make clear the freedom of choice Catholics have on the issue. However, his criticism is based on a calculation of what the Church allows before it is based on his own independent reflection. If he did not see a permitted freedom, Ben would probably avoid independent reflection. His thinking from the start in that case would be to try to justify the Church position.

Ben's fundamental view of faith centers on the idea that first of all one trusts or has faith in the messenger. "We [accept] something as true because we trust the person who told us." He pointed out that we are naturally of a mind to trust authority, that we cannot live our day-to-day lives except by accepting many authorities. Denying that he has ever disagreed with a teaching of the Church, he said that if he ever were to struggle, he would put his final judgment with the Church, believing that the Holy Spirit does guide the Church.

This person is one for whom all authority, that is the right to judge and decide, is wholly outside himself, invested in other persons or, perhaps, especially in the person of the Pope. His attitude is one of surrender or obedience to external authority. He is clear, for example, that further discussion about women's ordination cannot be a matter of investigation as to whether it might be possible but rather only an attempt to come up with credible explanations for the denial of women's ordination. There is, perhaps, some recognition that the Church's certain knowledge may at times outrun its ability to credibly explain what it knows. So he can admit that the present explanation for denial of women's ordination may not be convincing. Considering who is the messenger of this teaching, however, he is certain that the teaching is true. For him, theology's task is to explore and reveal this teaching in a more convincing way but certainly not to question its validity. One could say that he is certain of the truth but not convinced by the explanation, so he seeks clearer explanation without ever questioning its validity.

In Ben's understanding, conscience has no serious status unless it is correctly formed. Formation is everything. But correct formation seems to mean complete conformity with Church teaching, as he understands that teaching. It seems that an individual conscience that took issue with a Church teaching would necessarily be a conscience inadequately formed. As such, the conscience would lack status or validity.

Locating all authority wholly outside himself, he has a strong sense of belonging to something bigger than himself, that is, a community consisting of his early formators, his first pastor, and the Pope. For example, he asserts that his strongest sense of God's presence depends on the sacraments, "especially the social sacraments, the communion that that engenders among people who are [of] like mind and heart."

Priestly identity plays a complex role here. While women may teach in a seminary, they should not teach any courses directly related to priestly ministry, and lay students should not be admitted to these courses. In fact, he feels that priests often fail to support the needs of seminarians when in their chapel homilies they want to be inclusive of lay students and faculty who might be present.

He would not choose a woman as a spiritual director, not only because he would want someone (that is, a priest) who knows by experience the issues and challenges of preparing to be a priest, but also because "it is the priest who is the director of souls in the wider Church for the whole flock." He seems to believe that only priests truly have this ministry. Priests form a sacred and separate community. Most of these more authoritarian students do not want a woman as a spiritual director, but Ben is the only one who so explicitly founds that preference on his notion of priestly function. But something of this attitude probably underlies the similar preference of others even if it is not so clearly articulated.

This man finds no tension between integrity and loyalty in his attitude toward authority. Integrity is a matter of fidelity in faith to an absolute authority.

He prefers the lecture format as the best way to learn. He wants a strong separation from lay people and women at least in those things that are core to priestly identity and formation, and he wants a positive and confident presentation of priestly identity and doctrine. There is very little room here for self-questioning much less critical assessment of theological thought.

Example of an independent type

Chuck represents a student in strong contrast to Ben. Among his identified spiritual and political heroes are Juan Luis Segundo, Martin Luther King Jr., and former President Jimmy Carter. Chuck is one of the very few seminarians who did not include John Paul II. And as we shall see, he has a very different view of external authority, his own authority, and the nature of conscience.

In another important respect, Chuck differs from Ben. He is about seven years older than Ben, had been in graduate school before coming to study for his MDiv,

had taught in a high school, and even served a brief stint as the principal of a Third-World school during a volunteer year. Not surprisingly Chuck's learning preferences differ from Ben's. Chuck does not like lectures, particularly when the lecturer is only repeating the reading assignment. He is confident of his ability to read, understand, and interpret texts. He prefers the opportunity for discussion when he comes to class.

Despite these differences, there are similarities that become all the more interesting. For example, like Ben, Chuck does not feel that priestly formation is always well served in his seminary. (Chuck, however, belongs to a religious community that he finds very supportive and helpful toward this goal.) Like Ben, he sees part of the problem to be the presence of lay students in the seminary, and, like Ben, he thinks that separate classes for the seminarians might sometimes be helpful, though he did not specify which classes these might be. But even in this similarity regarding their views of lay students and the need for some separate classes, they situate the problem differently.

Ben bases his criticism on his perception that priests are set apart in a sacred manner from other people, that only priests can really appreciate this experience and should be the sole mentors or teachers in the areas of study most specific to priestly formation. His criticism of the homilies in the seminary chapel mentioned above, at this point, becomes angry. He feels betrayed by the very priests who teach him. He concludes that some of the priests at his seminary are not models of priestly identity and do not manifest joy in their vocation. He has a low opinion of them and a low opinion of the seminary when it comes to promoting priestly identity.

Chuck, by contrast, situates the problem in the practical difficulty of the school working out its mission. He senses that the seminary is more involved in teaching Church leadership, in general, as it applies to all ministers. Chuck does not object to this mission. He has respect for the lay students at his seminary and realizes that many of them are taking a far greater risk in being trained for ministry than he is taking. He judges that some of them have come to this school better prepared than he, and he is friendly and really engaged with many of them. He is also open to having a woman as spiritual director.

Ben can seem to bitterly feel betrayed by the seminary, as if the seminary panders to lay students. Chuck accepts the attention given to lay students even as it detracts from attention given to seminarians. He accepts it as a practical problem in a complex teaching situation. In fact, Chuck feels that faculty do care about his priestly formation but that priestly formation competes with the need of faculty to serve lay students and to cope with students of widely varying degrees of preparation, for example, international students new to English. If there is negative feeling here, it is the sense of being taken for granted.

Both of these young men are also similar in having an extremely positive attitude toward their early religious formation and its continuing presence in their lives. Ben seems especially to rely on his parish pastor of many years, a man

he sees as clear about his priestly identity and his love for the liturgy. Chuck especially mentions his parents, one a cancer survivor who taught him to trust God in all things and the other a person in love with life who taught joy to everyone.

Ben speaks of a friend's mother who was very religious and happy. His experience of this family drew him into his faith in a more serious way, leading to a more personal relationship with God. Chuck received unexpected opportunities for ministry during college and during a volunteer year. These experiences revealed his own deepest desires and gave him a sense of guidance by the Holy Spirit. For both of these men, "conversion" was a process rather than one brilliant moment.

Yet for all these similarities in religious experience and sources of faith, the two men carry their experiences quite differently.

For Ben the early experiences have a complete and settled quality. They constitute a "Rock of Gibraltar" to which he always returns. The positive experience of his friend's family returned him to what he already had been taught. Positive learning experiences in the seminary also seem to reinforce what he already knows, if giving him a clearer understanding. For him, it is like finding more credible explanations for what the Church already knows. In fact, asked specifically if he had been changed by his seminary experience, he said that it did not change him so much as develop what he had learned in his earlier catechesis. It deepened his "fidelity" to what already had been presented to him.

Chuck came from his family with gifts of trust and optimistic engagement with life; his experience during college and a volunteer year took him to some place within himself that was completely unexpected. He felt totally unqualified to do the ministries offered to him, but accepted them out of his trust and optimistic engagement. He felt that he could not refuse if people were "desperate" enough to offer these ministries to him. He was led to recognize what he surprisingly can do and most wanted to do. He recognized the Holy Spirit in the process. So Chuck's conversion was much more personal, much more about him and his desires. It led him to real change, to something new and unexpected.

These are subtle judgments to make about these men and their experiences. But it seems that Ben's experience took him back home, established him in what he already knew, while Chuck's experience set him on a new journey into what had been unknown. It is a subtle judgment because probably both sides exist in all important conversion experiences. There is something of coming back to the beginning but knowing the place for the first time. In Chuck's learning something unknown about himself, he is also learning again to trust God in all circumstances—a lesson originally learned from his parents. Ben's getting in touch with what he already knew takes him to a new level of commitment in his life. So these are not absolute differences but differences of emphasis.

These similarities and differences also cluster around distinct notions or experiences of Church authority. They spill out into the way each of these men live their personal relationship with God.

I had the sense during my interview with Ben that he actually wanted to tell me about his ideas on authority. It is a conscious centerpiece of his attitudes, a message he carries to others. He was teaching me. At the center is his belief that we need authorities in our life and, ultimately, an absolute authority. He said that faith in the message is based on faith in the messenger. This man deeply believes in his home pastor. One could say that he is the disciple of his pastor. At the end of the interview, when asked how he would like to be remembered, he said he would want to be known as a "man faithful in all things . . . who submitted himself to the judgment of those who were his superiors."

Interestingly, issues around authority brought up similarly strong feelings for Chuck, beginning with a question about what might be happening in the Church that could be threatening to the faith. Chuck especially fears fundamentalism, which he sees as rote religion. He stresses the need to think for oneself in a less rigid manner. Not surprisingly he associates fundamentalism with a kind of intellectual laziness, an unwillingness to reflect and interpret. He also criticizes a self-centeredness that allows one's own agenda to take precedence over the faith. For example, there are people who do not attend Church because of an issue they have with a particular bishop or priest. "You don't let one person take control of your faith that way, you know." His promotion of personal autonomy stands in sharp contrast to Ben's insistence on external authority.

Chuck experiences the Catholic Church as a "thinking" Church, and so he opposes the "black/white" approach of fundamentalism with what he describes as the "tribunal" style of the Catholic Church. The tribunal consists of the Magisterium, Scripture, and personal prayer/revelation. He sees these three working together, balancing each other, none taking precedence over the others, and together producing within the Church a variety of interpretations and insights. While Ben teaches the inevitable need for external authority, Chuck teaches the need to think for oneself while open to both external authority and interior inspiration. Chuck's understanding of conscience is "the ability to recognize, interpret, and deal with the interior moments or interior movements in one's self." Though conscience is "formed," it retains a highly spontaneous and individual character and is influenced directly by the Spirit. While acknowledging at least some difficulty with present Church teaching (homosexuality was the example he gave), he does not "struggle" because he puts his reservations into a wider context in which his relationship with Christ is paramount, and questions and differing interpretations are all a part of the Church's existence.

These men did not extensively describe their prayer lives or how they conduct their relationship with God. They said enough to again see a certain similarity and difference. Both of them report a very regular practice of prayer.

Chuck centers on noticing what Christ is doing in his life. He takes careful account of spontaneous movements and reactions within himself during prayer. He situates himself in a definite, historical spirituality that emphasizes careful attention to inner movements of a spontaneous nature. It probably explains his

use of the term "personal revelation." He is concerned to not give in to the "dark spirit." He did not describe his struggle with dark spirits, and I did not pursue it further during the interview.

Ben also describes regular prayer, but he emphasizes much more his practice of the Prayer of the Hours and Eucharistic liturgy. These are foundational to his life of prayer. He also reads the Scripture slowly and "chews over" the passages. I asked him specifically how he listens to God, and he acknowledged that sometimes he felt God was speaking to him but that usually what comes up "is in my own voice." He is less able to discern the Spirit in his own inner movements or is less trusting in these movements. Ben discerns the voice of God primarily by "comparing goods." He is concerned, for example, to make good decisions and not go down the wrong path. Asked how he knows something is good, he said that he relies on his formation. He depends on the experience of parents, family, friends, and "my catechetical background in learning the faith."

So Ben tests his inner reactions against that solid Rock of his formation; Chuck trusts his inner movements. But this difference is partly a matter of emphasis. For example, Chuck depends on consulting with a spiritual director, an external and objective observer, just as does Ben. Chuck appreciates the possibility that he might not clearly recognize or appreciate an inner movement without some outside help. To that extent, he needs others to clearly discern inner inspiration. Still it is clear that fundamentally Chuck trusts his inner experience while Ben trusts external authority by way of his formation and mentors. While Chuck seeks help, it is help in discerning his inner experience and inspiration, and finally it is his own inner experience that counts.

These differences between Ben and Chuck clearly have given rise to very different attitudes toward their respective seminaries, learning, and theology. They also color their attitudes toward coming pastoral work as priests. Ben was preparing for diocesan priesthood as a parish priest while Chuck, as a religious priest, could serve people in a variety of contexts.

Chuck's attitude about his work, already expressed in his past teaching and volunteering, centers around the desire to help people get in touch with a God who loves them unconditionally and acts in their lives. He wants to help them become aware of that action. Reacting out of his criticism of fundamentalism and black and white thinking, he also wants to help people be knowledgeable about their faith, able to reflect and interpret the teaching of the Church, in part, by bringing their own spiritual experience to that task. He wants them to think for themselves with some sophistication.

Ben focuses especially on liturgy. This appreciation comes out of his past relationship with his home pastor and is important to his sense of "priestly identity." He plans to emphasize loyalty to all the Roman rubrics and regulations. Fundamentally, he wants to be faithful to the Church and to encourage, even challenge, others to fidelity to the Church. When dealing with Catholics who struggle with a discipline or teaching, such as birth control, he wants to be patient.

He says that people are owed good explanations for the teachings of the Church, but he does not want to shy away from challenging them. Although he recognizes that people struggle, he is not comfortable when they settle on a stance that he perceives to be out of conformity with the Church. He worries that people might not recognize that he does this out of love. In the end, he cannot be at home without conformity. He is not as open as Chuck to differing interpretations and stances.

Both these men would consider themselves completely faithful to the Church, but Ben would emphasize submission to Church authority, while Chuck believes that a good Catholic must be a thinking Catholic who might sometimes differ with Church authority. The autonomy of the thinking Catholic is founded in the individual's personal inner experience of inspiration. One could compare the attitudes of Chuck and Ben as an emphasis on responsibility against an emphasis on fidelity. Of course Ben would consider faithful submission the very essence of responsibility, and Chuck would consider a reflective independence the essence of fidelity. Their attitudes toward authority and autonomy are at the heart of the difference between these two men.

Given these very dissimilar understandings of authority, responsibility, and fidelity, one can appreciate the complexity involved in determining how to teach students whose views span these two poles. In any particular classroom, faculty are likely to be confronted by students who are not only represented by views at these two poles but also by a range of positions between the two.

Varieties of religious experience

Another revealing characteristic that varies among seminarians is related to their religious experience, a topic on which almost all the interviewees reported. Certainly they stress a personal relationship with God. Usually they report some development in that relationship, whether in an evolutionary way as in the cases of Chuck and Ben or in a more dramatic and unexpected experience. Often it involves overcoming a longtime resistance to a sense of vocation to the priesthood. A few of the seminarians had very strong and sudden conversion experiences that completely changed their lives.

Sam is one of the men. His conversion came about while reading a book on life after death. He describes it as a sudden flash of insight in which he recognized the reality of Jesus, the reality of his existence, and his infinite goodness and power. He instantly knew that Jesus wanted him to become a priest, and though it was a vocation he had been fighting against, he decided to give his life completely to Jesus. In that moment, he knew who he was and what his purpose in life was to be. This self-assurance was spelled out in terms of his absolute faith in the Magisterium and his desire to be obedient. An aspect of his obedience would be a crusading tendency that would quickly correct and set straight a person he thought to be in error.

When asked if he ever struggled with a teaching or regulation of the Church, or ever disagreed with anything, he replied, "Absolutely not . . . I believe that the

Holy Spirit divinely guides the Magisterium. If the Magisterium teaches something, then even if I can't understand it, I am to embrace it as my own out of faith in what the Church is." In fact, he feels at times that the Pope should "tighten the reins a bit." These responses were typical; he was adamant and intense.

When asked about his understanding of fundamentalism, he replied, "Well actually I kind of like the fundamentalists out there . . . I like their conviction. They really are convicted people, and I just don't see enough of that in the Catholic Church."

Sam identified his religious and political heroes as Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Ratzinger, Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz, and President George W. Bush. These choices express his concern about orthodoxy, obedience to Church teaching, and strong enforcement by leadership. He hopes that as the regional bishops become stronger in their Catholic identity, lay students will be out of his seminary, and the seminarians will be back in cassocks.

Another seminarian that we will call Clive also had a sudden and decisive spiritual encounter. Clive's experience happened during a vocation retreat. He did not hear much of what was said during the retreat because he was having an experience of God showing him his whole life, how God had always cared for him in ways he had before not recognized. He cried a great deal during this experience of God's caring presence. He described it as having a weight lifted off his shoulders, and, he said, "It was like a freedom that came over me."

While this was a dramatic experience at a particular time, it has also been an ongoing experience. The seminary has fostered the process. His convictions had been wrapped up nicely, and he had felt he had it all together. But God took the bow and untied it, unwrapped everything, placing everything in a new light. Regular spiritual direction in the seminary has been essential because it helped him to articulate what had happened. The spiritual director has often helped him to understand what was happening to him. "I've learned a lot more about myself, about my psychological and spiritual being."

As a consequence, he has let go of his "staunch political conservatism," choosing instead to try to see issues through the Gospel, looking at what is best for people who don't have much of a voice . . . who can't afford to be self-sufficient."

The ongoing experience has caused him to move away from what he described as having been a monolithic idea of the Church in which everything is completely nailed down and final. Instead, he has come to a greater understanding of the complexity of the Church's tradition. He is more open to differing viewpoints among Catholics.

Yet, in his written responses, Clive at least falls into the middle group and takes up concerns that can even seem to move him to the right. His heroes are Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II along with a number of private persons with whom he had important relationships. He would like to see greater respect for Church authority, the Eucharist, and the sanctuary. Though open to women on the seminary faculty, he would like the faculty to be tilted toward the presence of

many priests because the latter are important to the formation dimension of the seminary. He prefers to have a man as spiritual director, but this seems to be more a matter of gender than formation or priestly identity. "Men understand men."

Clive's experience of conversion, in contrast with Sam's, is much more about a new awareness of how God is relating to him in an intimate and caring manner. This awareness, after its sudden onset, has been a continuing process. He is not only learning about God or Jesus, but also his own life, past and present, is being lighted up; he is learning about himself in relationship to God. The relationship continues to develop.

In contrast, Sam's experience seems more like a once-and-for-all event. It happened suddenly in a moment, but there is not a continuing process. In a moment he knew himself in the sense that he knew God's will for him. Absent is a sense of intimate relationship with God, full of the loving awareness described by Clive. Sam is very dedicated to Christ, but his own inner life and history are not lit up by it. The experience is more like being enrolled in a movement than being invited into a relationship. This difference comes out strongly in their pastoral attitudes.

Clive clearly sees the need for people to travel their own ways toward Jesus. He is very keen on letting people take ownership of their parish and shape it according to the spiritual requirements of the parishioners. He does not feel the need to "make it the way it should be."

The sharp before/after sense of Sam's conversion comes out in his attitude toward laity: "I just go on the assumption that they know nothing, and if they know something, then that's gravy, that's great. And so, basically, ministry is a kind of kindergarten. I know that I really knew nothing . . . Generally speaking, you have to assume the lowest common denominator and work up from there." Sam plans to run a "tight ship" when he becomes pastor. In contrast, Clive's past is revealed as being full of God's care. Sam's past is rejected ("I knew nothing") as a means of making him eligible for membership in the movement.

Sam can also be compared to Ben (described in the first case). It is Ben whose religious experience re-connected him to his early formation. So unlike Sam, Ben does not reject his past. But like Sam, the experience connected him with something outside himself, the authority of the Church.

Sam is more rigid by far than Ben, and more angry, but there is obvious hope for Sam. During his seminary career he participated in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). He admitted (and it sounded like an admission, a moment of real honesty) that his supervisors told him that when he lightens up, he is enjoyable to be with. They suggested he could work on developing that side of his personality. "And I have kind of heard that in the back of my mind echoing." During the interview he immediately moved away from that feedback and possibility and described how CPE really made him appreciate the Catholic Church with its strong teachings in comparison with what he perceives as the "looseness of Protestantism." Frequently during the interview, it seemed as if he

were moving between two distinct inner personalities: one lighter but somehow uncomfortable for him, the other rigid and angry but safer for him.

Surprisingly, Sam knows his Jungian typology, ESTJ, and his Enneagram, type 1. Aware that type 1 is perfectionistic and angry, he admitted to working with both of these realities, struggling with them in his life. He felt that he had lightened up to some extent. For example, he claims to be less ready immediately to correct someone. He feels that the Church has survived two thousand years without him and that he is only here to help the Lord. "I can't save everybody. I can't even save myself." Finally, he has learned a few things from his faculty. For all his positive feelings toward fundamentalists, he appreciates some of the contemporary methods of Scripture study acceptable to the Roman Church, and he is not a literalist about scriptural interpretation.

Both Ben and Sam are examples of seminarians who often present difficulties for the faculties of seminaries because, at least initially, they seem hostile and resistant to learning. Oddly enough, though Sam is more rigid and angry than Ben, he made visible during his interview another side of himself, which, however tenuous, offers possibilities for development. Ben showed no such signs of movement or flexibility. He is firmly convinced that his way is the right way and essentially the only way to proceed when it comes to his future ministry. His early training and relationship with a strict pastor deeply affects his vision for the future.

Four examples of growth

The focus of the following four examples is on growth experienced by students. These examples demonstrate how a religious experience produces change when it sheds light on the person's inner life.

Bill had a visionary experience at Medjugorje, when he was about seventeen years old. He saw flashes of light and an extremely clear silhouette of the Virgin Mary. In an instant he experienced the presence and mercy of God even though in the past he had been cynical about religion and about life in general. He had come from a family with many emotional issues; now he realized that God had been there the entire time through all the family problems. The pilgrimage experience released him from a general cynicism toward life, a cynicism that had been a defense against life.

Later, problems in a relationship with a woman caused him to enter psychotherapy together with her. As he saw more clearly his own contribution to their problems, he also saw how he had projected his own family experience onto his relationship with God. His religious experience in Medjugorje began a relationship with God, but Bill constantly felt that he was letting God down. He experienced God as a harsh taskmaster who imposed impossible expectations, just as he had experienced his parents. Therapy freed him from this image of God. The light cast on his inner life and past life has remained an ongoing process. Pastorally, it has made him more patient with other people. During seminary, CPE

taught him to "check his heart" as he enters pastoral encounters. He wants to know his feelings as he deals with a person so that his feelings do not get in the way of listening to the person. As a result, he sees himself as more approachable and more able to accept different perspectives in people.

Religious experience began a journey that led through therapy and brought a great deal of light into this man's inner life. He is now markedly open to experience, including the role of women in his formation and spiritual direction. He prefers discussion in class to lectures because sharing his views and asking questions help him process and integrate the material.

Bill believes that his struggles with Church teachings are really inner struggles within himself; the struggles are about him rather than about his relationship with the Church. By always tending to assume that the problem is his, he may be avoiding conflict with others—including Church authorities. He is certainly doing his best to avoid projecting his own issues onto others. On the other hand, he has the picturesque image of himself as "dating" the seminary. He recognizes the possibility that it will not work out between himself and the Church. He is clearly on a journey, not hunkered down in a bunker.

Bill often finds that God as presented in the seminary is too generic and almost impersonal. His very personal experience of God in Jesus Christ is central to this young man, and he wants always a sense of being on a personal mission. Religious experience in conjunction with psychological development is opening this man to freely engage the experiences of seminary formation.

Paul's theological views are traditional and his personal religious behavior is pious. His religious experience takes him back to his childhood formation and helps him to take that formation seriously again as an adult. The experience began with a negative reflection on the direction of his professional life. He was in business school when he began to feel that happiness eluded him because he seemed always to be living in the future and never in the present. Living was deferred, to be the consequence of something not yet achieved. Now realizing how self-centered he had become, he wanted to give his all to God. He thought about the past, his life as a Catholic when he was a child participating in the rituals of the Church, rituals such as Stations of the Cross. He remembered childhood as a time when he was happy and certain of the truth. He wanted that happiness and truth once again. In fact, what he primarily wants to bring back to present Church life are devotions such as the Rosary and Eucharistic processions.

Paul identifies strongly with Church authority. His struggles with Church doctrine have been efforts primarily to "understand" them in order to explain them to others. He strongly moves toward conformity with what the Church teaches. He feels that any difficulties he had in the past were a matter of his ignorance.

He has the characteristics of an authoritarian type. But when asked about his own evaluation of his strengths and weaknesses for priesthood, he mentioned his struggle to really hear people. During a summer CPE program he came across

many people who had been hurt by the Church, and his first reaction to each of them was somewhat defensive, wanting to explain and make distinctions for them. By the end of the summer, he realized how destructive his defensiveness had been; he felt that he owed them an apology. Apparently he did offer apologies to some of them so that the final couple weeks of the program became a new and gratifying experience for him. He wanted to become a "more skilled and compassionate and understanding [listener]."

As a result, he had a new concern about polarization in the Church and was already hoping that he could find compassionate ways once he became a pastor to be with people who see things differently. At the time of the interview, he was involved in a parish as part of his field education. He and his pastor were not always in agreement. "We don't agree on everything but it's amazing. The first year was kind of just getting to know each other, and this year it's we can talk about almost anything. We may not agree, but we go there because it's fruitful for both of us, I think." The listening skills learned in CPE clearly are enabling this man to be more open, compassionate, and tolerant.

Darin was only in his second semester of theology when interviewed. His prior studies included a technical education in engineering and computers. He describes his religious experience as a very persistent but gentle call that would come to him from time to time and keep the question of priesthood open. He put off this apparent vocational calling during his engineering studies. But he did participate in campus ministry and attend retreats. Darin found that the faith handed to him from his parents gradually became his own. He recognized all that had been handed down to him was for the sake of a personal relationship with God. After completing his studies, he focused more on his sense of vocation and entered spiritual direction.

The communication taking place during prayer is a principal aspect of his present relationship with God, and he seems to have respect for spontaneous movements in himself as indications of God's presence. For example, often something in Scripture will "jump out" at him and seem to have great meaning in the current affairs of his life. During his short time in seminary, he has found the spiritual and human formation programs to be especially beneficial for his personal growth and self-knowledge. He has learned about his limitations, but he also sees more clearly his positive qualities.

I spent a good deal of time asking him about his experience of having other seminarians challenge teachings of the Church in their classes, in particular when they seem to disagree or dissent from Church teaching. These interactions have been uncomfortable for him, especially when he has not thought something out, so he "defaults" to the Church's stance. He is strongly predisposed to take the Church position and feels very "challenged" by expressions of dissent. But in the context of his experience of personal growth and self-knowledge, he recognizes this as a personal limitation. So, though he is challenged and uncomfortable, he feels it is good for him, that it forces him to think things through

and "it's making me [a] person who can see a little bit more of the other side of the issue, be a little bit more open." This feels good to him because, he said, it feels like he is growing. He recognizes his discomfort as a personal issue rather than an ideological issue; he sees his tendency to "default" as a personal limitation, an immaturity.

For Darin, personal growth is causing him to be intellectually more open, which he sees as an expression of his personal growth; it feels good to him. For him, growing academic sophistication and a desire to balance loyalty with freedom of enquiry, are rooted in the experience of personal growth and self-knowledge. The well-developed human formation program in this seminary is essential to his theological formation.

Dave, in his third year of theology, seemed very set in his views of the Church and his own personal piety. He comes from a particularly rigid Catholic back-ground and values traditional devotions and expressions of the faith, including cassocks and "uniformity in liturgical practice" among parishes. Uniformity is important to him, testifying to his need for identity to come from structure outside himself. His personal experience of God focused on being involved at a World Youth Day; a key part of the experience was being with so many people who shared his "love for the Pope."

He prefers lectures because learning "doesn't get sidelined" by questions and concerns of other students. He wants certain courses specific to preparation for priesthood, such as homiletics, to be taught by a priest. He is not enthusiastic about taking courses with lay people because their presence "overall . . . has not contributed to [my] education as a seminarian/priest." It is as if priesthood will involve for him a set body of knowledge, the correct answers, which he simply has to assimilate. He has no sense of doing theology or coming to grips with a complicated tradition. It does not seem that intellectually he has been broadened during these three years. He is strongly predisposed to accept Church doctrine without question, never really struggling with any doctrine. He reports himself totally satisfied. He is happy to leave responsibility for thinking with the Magisterium. He always "defers" to the Church.

Nevertheless, Dave has experienced growth through the regular evaluations that are a part of the formation program. During his first two years in seminary, he felt simply put down and criticized by the evaluations. He had no sense of constructive criticism. He felt attacked, that he had shared information that was used against him. He thought that the evaluators would "have it in for him" because of the conservative parish he came from. He initially experienced his evaluations out of that mind set. But he came gradually to realize that the evaluators had his best interests at heart, so he began to be more honest and trusting. By his third year, he experienced some actual affirmation during evaluation. Being able to be honest and to trust was the important difference for him.

As a consequence, he seems to have acquired a more pastoral approach to people who disagree with him, and he clearly does not want to be judgmental and tear down persons or groups with a different perspective. He knows he has been guilty of this in the past; now he wants to build up the body of Christ. It seems that Dave was able to see through his initial hostility toward the seminary personnel to find their actual care and affirmation. Thus, late in his seminary career, a change in personal stance has made him more open to a diverse Catholic culture and, possibly, to the complexity of the Catholic tradition.

Outcomes of the case studies and examples

I have briefly explored these four cases and four examples first of all to provide some flavor of the diverse attitudes among the Roman Catholic seminarians. Chuck is the most independent of the four primary cases; he is mindful of the complexity of the Catholic tradition and very articulate about his right to think for himself. Ben and Sam are much more concerned with orthodoxy and submission to authority. Sam seems particularly rigid, yet not without some seeds of healthy personality development. Clive is fairly typical of the larger middle group. On the whole he is trusting of Church authority and predisposed to go along with it or at least try to align himself with it. He is very unlike many seminarians of the 1960s who hungered for the reforms of Vatican II and who pushed for change. He does not seem as mindful as men like Chuck of the complexity of the tradition nor as apt to insist on his right to think for himself. On the other hand, he is open to his own struggles with Church doctrine, and respectful of the need for people to go through their own process toward relationship with Christ. Orthodoxy may come easily to Clive, but it does not seem to have the preeminent position it has for Ben and Sam. Relationship with Jesus is more important than being correct. Clive will probably encourage lay leadership rather than try to run a "tight ship."

A second purpose for these four cases and four examples is to suggest something of the different dynamics behind their positions. The differences between the independent and authoritarian types of students are most evident in attitudes concerning authority; this is where the consequences are most clear. Its inner meaning is manifested in the differences in religious experience and relationship with Jesus. The religious experience of the independent type seems to result in self-knowledge; it lights up their past and present experience of themselves. It seems to result in greater self-acceptance and compassion toward themselves and others. The religious experience of the authoritarian type certainly gives them a strong sense of identity, but it does so by leading them into a relationship to something outside themselves rather than by illuminating their own inner lives.

Those in the more authoritarian group sometimes use the language of being in a personal relationship with God, expressing it as intense love in both directions. They certainly have a strong sense of the reality of God. Yet it does not

seem to cast as much light on their own inner life and God's presence in their lives. Rather than warming the relationship, at least in that manner, it is more like gaining membership in something like an army of Christ; they seem more like warriors for Christ than like intimate friends of Christ. They feel support from others with the same sense of membership, a membership identified by a strict sense of orthodoxy and devotion to the highest Church authority. Some describe a sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves, and this "something bigger," while revolving around God, is more properly a group of like-minded persons. A few mentioned World Youth Day with the presence of so many fervent youth around the figure of the Pope as a moment in their conversion and vocation. In fact, the more authoritarian persons can seem in their intensity and ready hostility to be defending themselves against self-knowledge.

A third reason for the case approach has been to express the difficulties in defining the differences and getting to the heart of the differences among students with various attitudes toward learning. It is often a matter of emphasis. Two seminarians with vastly dissimilar attitudes and positions will still use many of the same words, perhaps even define these words in similar ways, and yet obviously mean something quite different. For example, several seminarians in defining "fundamentalism" commented on the rigidity of the fundamentalist. Some of those very seminarians seemed rigid to me! Yet, they would not apply that characteristic to themselves.

When Pope John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council, one of his explicit concerns was the legalism so rampant in the Roman Catholic Church. Yet no person would have claimed to be a legalist. The term "legalist" applies to someone else, not to me. Only in retrospect, and after personal transformation, can people recognize legalism in themselves. Fundamentalists do not see themselves as being rigid but as possessing and defending the truth in a society hostile to the truth.

Reasons for hope

Faculties can assist students who seem to resist learning by adapting their teaching styles in creative ways. Generally students of all stripes seem to have positive relations with faculty, though one of the seminaries has a problem with hostile attitudes toward many of the faculty members. The faculty and administration of this seminary is seeking ways to defuse the hostility. It appears that a group of authoritarian students coming largely from one parish is at the heart of this problem. They seem to bring with them a defensive and suspicious attitude. In the past, they have been in regular contact with the pastor of this parish, who held regular group meetings with these students. Certain of their attitudes, and the red-flag expression, "priestly identity," have become a kind of motto and carrier of bitterness. This situation is the exception, and while it is a problem for the school, it is not a problem the school is responsible for creating.

Character and Assessment of Learning for Religious Vocation:
Interview Study of Roman Catholic Students and Faculty

We were consistently impressed by the attempts of all five faculties to deal with the new generation of students. In general they demonstrate patience and have found methods for teaching these students. Among other things, they tend to use original source documents and official documents of the Church to demonstrate the complexity of the Roman Catholic tradition. They patiently entertain questions and even challenges.

Present in all seminaries is another positive element that moves students toward deeper understanding of themselves and their faith. Our analysis of the differences among today's seminarians, as well as our experience of what has led to useful changes and learning for many of them, suggests the value of learning that goes on outside the classroom. All seminaries require pastoral opportunities for their students. Clearly these programs have raised the pastoral sensitivity of seminarians. Even the most rigid of them who were part of this study, once they had been in the seminary for at least two or three years, demonstrated a sense of growth in their attitudes toward the people to whom they will minister. The schools provide opportunities or require participation in programs, such as CPE, that can bring about a great deal of self-awareness in a challenging and intimate peer situation.

The importance of religious experience and how different categories of seminarians relate to these experiences suggest the value of spiritual direction as a practice that encourages transformation. A majority of the seminarians, even the middle group, seem to prefer having a priest as spiritual director. Again, as we have seen, the reasoning can vary for this preference. Spiritual direction in the Catholic tradition has undergone great development over the past thirty-five years. The development of training centers has led to professional standards for this ministry. Trained spiritual directors have more understanding of issues such as transference/counter-transference, ethical considerations, and confidentiality. Continuing education and ongoing peer supervision is available at many spiritual centers and retreat houses. Spiritual directors are trained in skilled listening so that they can help directees recognize their experience of God and their own reactions to that experience. In this context, being a priest does not automatically qualify a person without specific training to be a spiritual director. Those who are well prepared for this ministry provide the students with a significant opportunity for growth.

One seminary stood out for its human development program. The program consists of regular small group discussions with priests and others responsible for the students' formation. The discussions, apparently, have been very open in dealing with sexuality, celibacy, and other issues of human development. The result as shown in our interviews is a strongly favorable attitude toward the faculty. Seminarians had an experience of actual growth and new self-awareness through this program. They developed a sense of belonging that is quite different from membership in "the army of Christ." They belong instead to a community characterized by intimacy and personal growth. The greater level of trust that

develops seems to lead to openness and readiness for academic learning. Even the student who "defaulted" to the position of the Church, also wanted to balance loyalty with freedom of enquiry.

What can faculty learn from the religious experiences of students and from their views of authority?

1. Many faculty members regard the more rigid students, who are most resistant to learning, as being students who are grounded in fear. In that case, it is always important to reach out to, and speak to, the fearful person behind the mask and not get "hooked" by the aggressive stance of these students.

2. Rational discussion about ideological issues sometimes only enables the continuation of the defenses by keeping the real fears and issues under cover. Faculty should listen to the person behind the defense. Especially when facing an openly hostile student, it is helpful to avoid either "fight" or "flight" (flight represented by rational discussion) but instead to "lean into" the experience of the student, that is, to really try to understand the experience of the student through patient questioning. Such "leaning into" the experience of the student expresses compassion and encourages trust.

3. When an idea or word becomes a red flag or slogan (for example, "priestly identity" at one of the seminaries) for students with rigid attitudes, the idea can become a lightning rod for complaint and hostility that then persists through each new class of students. Faculty need to find a consistent way to address the underlying reason for the use of such terms.

4. The developments that lead a rigid student to a more flexible stance and to greater openness to learning often come about through experiences of personal growth outside the classroom, though the growth will later manifest itself in the classroom. Personal formation programs and groups, CPE, supervised ministry, and experiences of evaluation by faculty and other mentors are paramount. The earlier in their education students have these experiences, the sooner they will be able to reap the benefits in classroom learning.

5. Young people want to belong. The religious experiences of some seminarians are an example of this desire, as is the emphasis by some on priestly identity. A few seminarians commented on the tendency to form ideological cliques. These are exclusive and defensive groups that resist change. A counter strategy is to develop groups that are inclusive and oriented toward growth. An example is the small group sharing in the human formation program at one of the seminaries, prayer groups in another, and small living groups in a third.

6. Students of all ideological positions expressed a desire to have some classes set aside exclusively for seminarians, especially classes most immediately related to priestly formation. In part this represents the need for forums in which they can be open with one another. Such forums are another example of small group sharing that is a part of the counter strategy to develop groups oriented toward growth.

7. Courses on religious experience and the psychology of religious experience could be offered to provide an incentive to engage in self-reflection since so many of the interviewees report that they highly value such experiences.

Part II. Identification of the impact of selected characteristics of seminary students on their learning for religious vocation

What approaches to learning do students prefer? Why do they prefer certain learning styles?

All the students we interviewed responded to written questions related to learning: "What is your preferred way of learning? Why?" To gain further information, during the interviews we asked them to elaborate on what assists their learning and what detracts from it. Their survey responses (forty-nine students answered the survey) were divided almost evenly into three categories: seventeen of them said they preferred lecture, fifteen discussion, and seventeen some combination of methods. Almost all of those who had a strong preference for the lecture method allowed that they also wanted time to ask questions; many of those who preferred discussion qualified their choice by indicating that the discussion should be structured and focused on specific material. Those who preferred a mixture of methods named most frequently the use of discussion, lecture, seminar, and audio-visual materials.

Lecture method. Students who preferred lectures provided various explanations for their choice. Most commonly they spoke about the importance of the teacher in conveying accurate information in an efficient way. This group identified the faculty member as the expert who possesses superior knowledge because of holding an advanced degree in the subject and thus being able to offer greater understanding and a wider view of the content. The quality of the lecture was a key factor in student choice of this learning style. Several students said they simply enjoyed hearing a stimulating talk.

Another reason for preferring the lecture method was related more to the subject matter itself rather than to the faculty member. Some of these students felt that introductory courses were more conducive to lectures because they gave students a common base of information, a firm foundation from which they could speak. Systematic presentation of subject matter helped the class stay on task and provided a clear outline of the main topics. Several respondents offered that they wanted to know objective information about the life of the Church, faith, and theology in general; a good lecturer could provide that foundation.

A few students chose lectures as their favorite teaching method because of their own learning styles. They mentioned that they were auditory learners; they liked material presented in an orderly fashion from an outline; or they were introverts, slow at processing and in need of time to listen and reflect on what was said before they could join in discussion. Students also were concerned about having to reveal their own thoughts about controversial topics; some of them

feared the response of the teacher to their opinion if they disagreed and others were not eager to share ideas with classmates who might disapprove of their way of thinking.

The three main reasons for choosing the lecture method were: to take advantage of competent presentation of the material by a knowledgeable teacher, to put in place a strong foundation, especially in introductory courses, and to respond to personal learning styles. All three resulted in a more authoritative role for the faculty member than other methods of teaching; generally the student role was more passive.

Discussion method. The students who chose discussion as their preferred way of learning seemed to hold a decidedly different view of what they expected of the educational process. Many of them spoke of discussion as a way to help them assimilate, clarify, and integrate material. It gave them a chance to express what they were thinking, to test their ideas, and to then make modifications based on the reactions of other students. Several thought they achieved more insight and greater depth of knowledge through a wider view of the topics under consideration. One student put it this way: "It helps me flesh out the details and make sure my thinking is sound and clear."

Some students focused on their relationships with others in the class, indicating the importance of hearing their reactions, especially the students who represented groups with whom they would some day exercise ministry. They appreciated especially how they were able to reinforce connections with various disciplines as other students shared their own thoughts and experiences. Staying open to the ideas and opinions of classmates with whom they might not necessarily agree was an added advantage. The exchange of ideas helped them explore the issue and come to know it from diverse perspectives.

A third area reflecting the value of class discussion was more personal, relating to the backgrounds students brought and the personal growth they were seeking at the graduate level. Older students in particular exhibited more confidence about their previous experience as a source of reflection. Some of them said they knew how to interpret what they read and did not need to have the teacher reiterate the material. They were eager to have their ideas tested by other students to uncover the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches. A few students confessed that they simply liked to talk, to share their opinions, to be an active participant in class rather than merely to listen.

The main benefits of class discussion revolved around three concepts: greater knowledge, broader perspectives, and more personal expression. In the first case they felt they could achieve more insight and depth because of being able to clarify and integrate material through the discussion process. Others gained insights from relationships with classmates who brought additional experiences and approaches to the subject matter, often including those who had served in pastoral ministry. Some students were partial to discussion because of their personalities—outgoing and expressive.

Combination of methods. In some ways almost all students wrote about or spoke of more than one method of learning, but the two previous groups had a strong preference for either lecture or discussion. The last group mentioned those two teaching styles but usually added a number of other possibilities, such as use of audiovisuals and multimedia presentations (one even mentioned PowerPoint), small group projects, student seminar presentations, and short papers prepared for discussion purposes. Most indicated that diverse approaches were necessary because of the differences in the material in introductory and advanced courses or because of the students in the class, some more outgoing than others or more articulate than others.

Of most appeal to students who liked the combination of lecture and discussion was to have a lecture first as a means of being introduced to or confronting new material and then having discussion to help assimilate and wrestle with new ideas. These students liked the explication of essential material in a format that introduced the most important issues in an orderly fashion. Then deeper analysis could take place in discussion informed by faculty input. The combination alleviates the problem articulated by some students who felt that discussion could deteriorate merely to sharing uninformed opinions.

Seminar-like classes had several advantages. Students found that giving presentations helped them with their leadership skills and their ability to articulate complicated subject matter. Group projects provided opportunities to participate actively and to collaborate with others. Seminars requiring written work ahead of time had advantage as expressed in these words: "Writing and discussion forces me to appropriate the thoughts of the assigned authors." Some students spoke of an action-reflection model, which could be pastoral action or the action of writing a synthesis paper, both of which helped integrate and focus the material.

The rationale for a mixture of teaching formats varied according to student characteristics and subject matter. The desire for variety was a strong incentive for some students; others wanted class time to be used more effectively by combining lecture on essential points with discussion for the sake of integration. Seminar-style classes necessarily involved several approaches and tapped into students' desire to organize and lead classes. In most cases student involvement was essential to a good learning experience.

What maximizes learning? What detracts from learning?

Most students who indicated a preference for lectures expressed certain conditions that needed to be present for this method to maximize their learning. Almost all of them wanted the opportunity to ask questions, and a few would allow for at least some discussion among students but only if strictly limited in time and content. If questions were allowed, they felt it was easier for them to assimilate and integrate the material. Several specified that faculty should be organized, structured, and clear, talented speakers who stayed on the subject matter if lectures were to be beneficial.

Detracting from learning were lectures that seemed to be mere repetition of the readings, without much elaboration or clarification. Some students also found lectures unsatisfactory when the viewpoint of the faculty member was significantly different from their own. One student put it this way: "I don't learn much when the prevalence of agendas of faculty are fundamentally opposed to truth." Students were bothered by faculty members who were perceived as not only being in disagreement with Church teaching but also not open to changing their minds. Of equal concern for students were teachers who seemed to be "touchy" about students who disagreed with them. One student said, "If we have questions about something they are teaching, they kind of react to our probing or to our own searching. We're not taking them on or challenging them, but sometimes it is perceived that way, and there is a great sensitivity about that." Another said, "Sometimes I get the sense that faculty are almost afraid when they see seminarians coming in. They're afraid that seminarians are going to be 'too conservative,' and sometimes I think even among seminarians there's the sense that faculty are 'too liberal' or something like that. There's a tension there; whatever place on the spectrum either side is on, there are tensions. . . . So, I mean, in the Church we need some wholeness, not rigidity on either side of the spectrum."

Students who favored lectures felt uneasy about the waste of time in discussion because of having to listen to what they considered to be "the relative ignorance of classmates instead of learning from someone who really knows." Others were afraid to voice their opinions because of fear of reprisal, sometimes from a faculty member, but more often from fellow students. When students were new to a school they were more likely to feel too intimidated to ask questions for fear of being labeled either as too conservative (more likely) or too liberal, but as time went on they felt freer to engage with the faculty member.

Many students whose preferred style of learning was discussion insisted that this method maximized learning when the faculty member was active in the discussion process. This response came from two different insights. Some believed that discussions had to be carefully constructed, with questions posed by the professor relating specifically to the readings for the class. Others liked the faculty member to monitor the discussions and evaluate the opinions of students so that incorrect or ill-informed assertions would not stand as equal to those based on class material. Both concerns suggest that unsupervised discussion detracts from learning. These students believed that discussions were less valuable when they strayed from the subject matter of the course or when they were allotted too much time for questions of minor significance.

Implying the value of involvement of faculty in discussions, some students thought learning was enhanced by a single large group discussion led by the professor. Others liked the opportunity for more participation in small groups. Obviously, class size would be a determinative factor in choosing one method over the other. Considerable learning took place for these students when they

were challenged by other students and by faculty. They wanted to see arguments from all sides and examine what they believe and why they believe it. The fundamental difference between the group preferring discussion and many of those preferring lectures was their willingness to learn from other students.

The rationale given by students for a variety of approaches to teaching was as diverse as their preferences. Some with an independent spirit believed that learning was maximized for them when students enjoyed an array of opportunities to make presentations as well as lead and shape class time. Others expected faculty to make presentations but then allow time for questions and discussion, preferably for a specified and rather short period of time. Several of these students expressed their dislike for taking copious lecture notes and for taking written exams. From their perspective, these exercises detracted from their ability to learn. Engaging in a variety of learning opportunities appealed most to this group who tended to eschew routine.

How do preferred learning styles correlate with students' backgrounds?

In reviewing the reports of how students learn and why they prefer one method to another, we find correlation with several others of their characteristics. Many of those who have a strong preference for the lecture method said they wanted to hear from an authority figure in the person of the faculty member, who they expected to provide them with great clarity about what the Church teaches. They were among the students who tended to identify authority as something outside themselves, rather than claiming inner authority. For them, learning was taking in what others with proper credentials thought about and declared to be correct teaching. They tended to see education as the process of memorizing or at least knowing where to find answers to as many questions as possible concerning their faith. These students were likely to refer to official sources to be sure the teacher was staying on track. They were not comfortable with pastoral practices that seemed to them to deviate from their particular way of understanding Church teaching. Supervised ministry often proved to be a challenge to their determined way of thinking. These students generally favored having priests teach them who were on fire and enthusiastic about the priesthood.

Students who were more advanced in their studies and felt confident about their basic knowledge of their faith were more likely to accept challenges from faculty. One student put it this way: "I would appreciate to first learn what the Church teaches and why; then I wouldn't mind learning about some of the challenges or problems particular teachings pose." Nonetheless, some students at all levels identified intellectual growth as learning how to conform one's own understanding to that of the Church, rather than learning how to think through issues. A student of this mindset said, "Growth can be measured by compliance to Church teaching."

For the most part, students who preferred discussion appreciated the opportunity to delve deeply into material and even to disagree with what was presented in the readings or class. At best, these interactions would result in the state that one student described: "I really feel like my theology changed just because I understand more now. I've learned; I just didn't know before."

Another issue affecting learning is the perceived gap between students and faculty based on generational differences. One student felt that "some faculty who were involved with the Church before Vatican II were negatively affected by a lot of authoritarian superiors and other hurtful situations." When these faculty members seemed to diminish the values associated with order and tradition, students felt less free to question their ideas. One said, "I don't want to create an antagonistic environment with the professors." Other students handled the relationship differently and expressed their differences through silence and simply ignoring much of what a particular faculty member might teach.

Whichever the preferred style of learning, students were bothered by faculty who seemed out of touch with the practice of ministry. They felt that faculty needed more direct connection with ministerial settings so that they could more readily apply class material to the practice of ministry. In a similar vein, students who had considerable ministerial experience believed that in most cases they were not given credit for this background nor was it used effectively in class. This reaction underlines the usefulness of knowing well the backgrounds of students, how they learn, and what they bring to the learning enterprise.

How can faculty profit from what students said about learning for their vocation?

1. Students with different backgrounds—religious, educational, and ministerial—require a variety of approaches to learning; faculty members need to be aware of the type of students registered for each course and seek to discern how they learn best.

2. Students' perceptions about faculty vary widely within institutions depending in large part on the match between the two groups on theological viewpoints and ministerial ideals. When the match is close, the trust level is higher and learning is enhanced provided faculty members challenge students.

3. Most students are deeply touched by the commitment of faculty, by their compassion, by their passion for scholarship, and by their willingness to help students understand the material.

4. Even the most competent faculty member will be challenged by students who come to seminary with deeply held views that cannot be substantiated or are only part of the Church's tradition and teachings.

5. A few students look upon some faculty as incompetent, having no teaching ability, and providing no content; in every institution assessment of faculty is critical so as to determine if the fault rests with students or with the faculty member.

6. Professors who readily respond to questions, converse with students, and exhibit excitement when they are teaching and listening to students, generate enthusiasm for learning.
7. Freedom to disagree with or question for the sake of understanding what a professor says enhances learning and should be seen as a desire to learn rather than as obstinacy or contrariness on the part of students.
8. Students who trust the institution where they are studying are much more likely to be amenable to learning and developing a broad view of theology.
9. Students want faculty members to be role models; the students we interviewed were especially concerned about having good priest role models.

Part III. Ascertaining how the characteristics of students and their learning experiences contribute to the shape of their future ministry and their concepts of ministerial leadership

What is your concept of ministerial leadership?
What is required of an effective leader?
What type of leadership is needed in the Church today?

Students were asked to describe their idea of effective ministerial leadership for today's Church. Their responses addressed the basic purpose of leadership, ways of interacting effectively with those to whom they will be ministering, and their personal leadership style.

When identifying the purpose of leadership, students often mentioned first bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people. Their conception of how to exercise this kind of leadership was fairly abstract. Students put it in these words, "I have dreams of bringing people to Christ," and "I want to bring alive the memory of what Jesus fought for and recall how Jesus approached individuals with the Good News," and "I want to lead a congregation in their daily lives more toward imitating Christ and toward making Him present in the world." Becoming more concrete, another student said, "I want to fight for the fundamental dignity of the human being in the way Jesus did, especially the oppressed and minorities."

Several spoke of leadership in broader terms. They said it would require being able to articulate a vision of where the Church should go in the future as opposed to a problem-solving role. One student said, "Having a vision requires me to look at the institution as a whole, along with grasping the significance of each part." The capacity to inspire people is involved in this aspect of leadership.

More commonly students saw the meaning of their leadership in terms of service. One expressed this view, "I want to be seen as someone who is willing, always willing, to help people at a moment's notice." A typical student with this idea of leadership said, "I think of ministry as talking one-on-one with people, guiding them, counseling or encouraging them toward the faith, especially young people." Another student said, "I want to participate in people's lives and I want

to be able to share with them totally the gifts that I've been given. I cannot think of a better way of doing this than through the sacraments . . . the unconditional love that takes place through them."

Beyond vision and service, a third task of leadership was seen as "discerning other people's gifts and talents and putting them to use for the greater good." This aspect of leadership would surely involve administrative ability, "running the staff and the office, some coordination" as one student said; yet only a few mentioned this role as a significant part of the work of priests.

When speaking about effective ways to fulfill these goals, students mentioned the importance of being proactive, of welcoming people, and inviting them to participate. They recognized the need to understand reasons for the gap between people and priests and ways of bridging the gaps. Another student allowed that it is hard to translate the Good News into language that young people can understand and that will nurture their faith. He spoke of how important it is to know "how people understand Christ acting in their lives and focus on that first and then doing everything I can to make sure that Christ loves them unconditionally." Exemplary of this way of thinking about leadership, an older student said he was more concerned about "bringing people closer to Christ rather than worrying about people having everything squared away with Church teaching."

The present situation in the Church relating to the use and abuse of power drew several responses. One student put it this way: "Besides leading ritual, I think people are going to really want to see someone who can bring them together in terms of community, who can make the effort to step out if necessary and give voice to certain subjects that need to be discussed." Some recognized the need to use authority to build up the Church by sharing leadership. They saw the diversity, the pluralism, and the energy that exists in the Church as an exciting prospect for future ministers. If a leader is to relate to many different kinds of people, great tolerance is required, one student observed.

As for personal leadership style, two models prevailed, with variations of each. One was collaborative, focused on a desire for involvement of the laity; the other was restricted, more concerned with individual control. In the first instance, students recognized their limitations when they spoke about how they would lead. "I'm human," one man in his early thirties said. "I need the assistance of others to live this life well and do this work effectively." Several of them were aware of the education required for many specialized ministries, such as religious education for adults, young people, and children, sacramental preparation, administration, and liturgical services. These students understood the value of learning to interact with others in a give-and-take exchange rather than simply being the one in charge. Some spoke of how they learned in pastoral placements that "it is not all mine to do." They recognized that others may be more knowledgeable about certain areas of ministry and they do not always have to be the one with the answers.

Those in the second group with a more restricted notion of leadership generally acknowledged the necessity of involving others in the ministry, but the roles they would assign or allow them were more limited. Their image of a well-functioning parish would have the pastor in firm control with lay ministers carrying out the tasks assigned to them. These students envision themselves as "the answer men," always ready to instruct and direct. This visualization of ministry places an extreme burden on them to always be ready with information about "what the Church teaches." Their goal in learning is deeply affected by this understanding; they want to be sure to know exactly the right response. During studies their impatience with discussing theological issues that would consider various viewpoints is understandable, given the scenario of their role as they portray it.

What strengths should an effective leader possess?
What weaknesses should be overcome?
What concerns do you have about being a leader?

A question about the strengths a good leader should possess resulted in a wide range of responses. Some named virtues connected with good relationships in general. The most frequently mentioned were being compassionate and gentle, understanding, honest, and having integrity. Others spoke of having a religious sense. One student said, "People want to know why God does certain things or how they should approach God." Many mentioned related interpersonal skills like being approachable, accessible, adaptable, and a good listener. Several students identified the importance of feeling a strong sense of vocational call that would make a person confident without being arrogant. Accompanying this call should be "a peaceful spirit, a peaceful heart."

From a different viewpoint, students recognized the public nature of Church leadership and the different set of qualities that would be important for this dimension of their role. "The ability to speak publicly, to be willing to reach out to people and let them know you care about them and wish to serve them—all these are important," one seminarian said. He went on, "People don't just follow you because you are a priest and want them to follow. I'll have to be able to attract people to work with me." Many of them recognized that they will be required to connect with people, sympathize with people. It takes time to be comfortable with all these expressions of leadership.

In preparing for ministry, students readily identified two broad categories of weaknesses to be overcome if they were to serve as effective leaders, namely, negative personality traits and a lack of specific abilities needed for the exercise of ministry. Almost all of them felt apprehensive about being in a public role, especially those with more introverted personalities. One student said that because he is somewhat reserved, he has been told he "appears distant, apathetic, and indifferent." He finds it difficult to imagine how to change his demeanor, because he knows this is the impression he gives though it does not represent his

true self. Fear also may arise from low self-esteem or from recognizing the lack of personal relational skills. Being impatient, too quick to judge—just not thinking things through, was another student's way of naming his weaknesses.

Other weaknesses were associated with specific expertise or relational abilities required for the exercise of ministry. Several students were concerned about being defensive in the face of disagreement or criticism. One student thought he might respond that way because of being overly sensitive, while another saw himself as being self-centered by letting his own agenda take precedence over faith. Some concerns revolved around specific tasks, like having a mental block about finances, or lacking clarity in communicating ideas, or being fearful of dealing with people in grief and distress. Broader categories included the need for more "shepherding skills" and to be more assertive and firm in getting across directives. One person admitted to being quite disorganized and not task-oriented.

In discussing their concerns about ministry, students responded with both broad and specific examples. Many recognized the ideological split among people as a serious problem in promoting the unity of a community. The fear of polarization took on several meanings; for some, the concern centered on how uncomfortable and unpleasant it might be working in a setting where people were at odds; for others, the concern was based on the fact that differing views would represent varying degrees of compliance with Church teaching, an unacceptable state of affairs. The latter group thought of this stance as a failure to be open to the truth. One seminarian said, "I sense that people need protection from the culture that allows anything. They should be taught the truth." Others wondered what they could do to bring peace to these situations, and most felt uncertain and uneasy about how to proceed.

From a different perspective, students worried about people being upset by inadequate ministry. Many of them spoke of their own shortcomings, including the weaknesses identified above. They added concerns such as "not really hearing people and understanding the experiences that have formed them;" or "failing to empathize enough with the people, with the real problems they are having;" and "being too defensive." Being a leader in a large impersonal parish is a fate awaiting many of these students. Their concerns about ministering effectively to a congregation of ten thousand or more persons are understandable. They will have to depend on a wide range of pastoral assistants to carry out many of the tasks and to keep them informed of trends and developments in the parish. It is reasonable that such daunting tasks cause some of these seminarians to experience doubts and fears about their leadership abilities. One of them said, "It seems egotistical to put oneself forward as a leader when we have very little experience. Leading so many people well requires mentoring, and we don't have much opportunity for that."

In a related matter, several seminarians suggested that priests are sometimes put on pedestals when they are given so much responsibility. Some saw this "privileged place" as an expression of clericalism, where "father knows best,"

even when he lacks experience and wisdom. Others would welcome being so highly regarded.

What assists students in developing a pastoral approach to ministerial leadership?

As they were in the process of preparing for ministerial leadership, students expressed the hope that faculty who teach them would have an ongoing connection with ministry settings, so that they would understand the ministry students would be exercising in a few years. They especially appreciated faculty who could raise questions and suggest future directions related to ministry. When asked about what was most helpful in their preparation, one student's comment reflected the thinking of many, "Academic courses, intellectual discussions, ministerial practice and skills, it all helps as long as the faculty help make connections." Pastoral placements, ministry in the community, supervised ministry, and especially CPE, served as high points in assisting students with their developing sense of ministerial leadership.

What can faculty learn from student views of leadership and how can they help them develop approaches to ministry and leadership that are in accord with the needs of the Church?

1. Faculty should not overlook the insecurity of most students as they approach their ministry of leadership but rather provide opportunities through practical experience and role-play, for example, to familiarize students with situations they are likely to encounter.
2. Faculty should be aware that what appears to be recalcitrance on the part of students may actually reflect their fear of taking on the responsibility of being a public leader. Many are worried about teaching the wrong thing or not being able to answer questions appropriately.
3. To the extent possible, the relationship of ministerial leadership and theological learning should be made explicit so that students gain confidence in carrying out their responsibilities.
4. Personal involvement of faculty in ministry settings is reassuring for students who are concerned about the context in which they will lead; use of examples relating theological learning to pastoral contexts is crucial for students who have limited exposure to ministry settings.
5. Faculty should elicit from students their concepts of leadership so that they can help them broaden their perspective from a focus on one-on-one ministry to leading a whole community toward fulfillment of its mission.
6. When students think about being a leader, it is often limited to their previous experiences of leaders, so exposure to various styles of leadership is a necessary part of their theological education.
7. The way faculty exercise leadership in the classroom serves as a model for future leaders and should reflect the same kind of care and competency that will be expected of future ministers.

8. Faculty awareness of concerns of students about leadership can serve as a guide for course and program elements. Consistent interaction with field supervisors should be built into programs so that weaknesses can be addressed.

Part IV. Discovering from interviews with faculty some successful approaches to student learning, especially relating to students who enter theological studies with fixed understandings of their religious tradition

In interviews with faculty, it was immediately apparent how much they enjoy teaching in seminaries and how much they care about their students. Virtually every one of the forty-five faculty members we interviewed said they would choose again the same profession. Nonetheless, they acknowledged times of great frustration with students who for one reason or another resist learning. For the sake of this research, we asked faculty to concentrate on difficulties they have with teaching rather than on the satisfaction they experience. Our theory was that if we had a better understanding of reasons for resistance to learning in students and of effective teaching techniques used by faculty to reach these students, we would gain worthwhile insights.

We asked faculty to identify what they thought had an effect on the attitudes of students who make classroom teaching a real challenge because of their indifference or mistrust. We also asked how they managed to overcome some of the resistance that made it possible for them to lead students to deeper understanding of their faith and their future ministry. Their observations about what contributes to positive student responses were varied and their suggestions for good practices were constructive. We believe that the findings of our research will correspond to experiences with at least some students in most seminaries.

What are some possible causes for resistance to learning?
Several topics came up repeatedly in interviews with faculty relating to the backgrounds of students as the cause for resistance to learning. Faculty believe that narrowness in approach to theological studies is caused in part by insufficient intellectual ability and inadequate preparation. These factors, combined with lack of historical knowledge and the tenor of the culture generally, and in the Church particularly, intensified the problems. When asked how this narrowness manifests itself, faculty said it was in part related to what students thought should be the content of theological education. Many students expected to focus only on learning what is contained in magisterial documents rather than discussing the full expanse of the tradition. A plurality of opinions about theological issues is not acceptable to them. One faculty member said that to some students it means "they want to know only what the Holy Father says, what the Church teaches." For these students, authority resides in Church documents and

certain Church leaders who give validity to the subject matter being taught, not the teacher and not the engagement of the student.

Lack of intellectual capacity and educational background contribute to this narrow understanding of what constitutes Church teaching. Faculty have long complained that a majority of students do not have scholarly interests, perhaps because they lack basic intelligence or educational preparation. Many have not been exposed adequately to the humanities and social sciences. While the study of philosophy is required, too many students see this exercise as a matter of fulfilling requirements rather than as an opportunity to embrace a philosophical way of thinking. Lack of solid faith formation resulting in virtually no prior understanding of the tradition adds to the problem. Some have studied extensively the writings of John Paul II, but they have little knowledge of the broader context of their faith. For some students, conservative television is a major source for learning how to interpret and practice their faith.

Faculty believe that students' lack of a historical sense of the Church contributes significantly to their limited view. Students are not aware that the struggles of the past were necessary to the development of current teachings. For them, history is viewed as a time of certainty rather than a time of struggle that helped the Church arrive at its present understanding of itself. One faculty member said that students often live in an idealized past, and they want to bring that past to the present; for them this would represent an enlightened era. "It is easier to be fond of the Church of a hundred years ago than to figure out how to work in the Church today," he said. A history professor noted that students do not relate to Vatican II and its impact on the direction of the Church. "They see this major event of modern Church history as merely one other of a series of councils."

Adding to the problem is the fact that students come from a "culture of confusion." They have grown up with immense changes in society—changes in family structures, in technology, in life styles, in Church practices. They have lived through a period of experimentation. Now, in a different era, they, along with many others who have grown up in this culture of uncertainty, are seeking stability. The growing fundamentalist tendency in the present culture gives them support. When confronted with faculty who were raised in an era that sought to expand horizons, students can become defensive. Rigidity and resistance then become defenses against learning anything that challenges their prior way of thinking.

Faculty were able to identify feelings they recognize in students who find themselves living in this tension. A common perception is that fear dominates the thoughts and emotions of these students. They are fearful of the shape the Church is in, and they want to change it, but they know they do not have the skills or experience to remake the Church in their image of what they think it should be. They are pained by the loss of a world where pieces seemed to fit together. Some feel hurt because the changes in the Church were not what they wanted for the

Church today. One faculty member interpreted the situation as follows: "They are angry because they are not going to get the power and prestige that priesthood used to promise. They believe faculty have caused this state of affairs." Faculty attribute a sense of threat as another reason to resist learning. The threat may be to their vocation, or they may be threatened by or feel uncomfortable around women, especially those who are their teachers and co-workers. A sense of a loss of control or power and feelings of uncertainty dominate some students' psyches; their response is to resist certain kinds of learning.

Further, when it comes to theological programs, faculty goals are often decidedly different from those of some students. A primary disparity resides in the very purpose of seminary education. One faculty member said, "Their goal is priesthood, not learning theology; the endpoint is ordination, not theological understanding. They want to get through seminary as quickly as possible—jump through the hoops. 'What do I need to do to pass this course?' It is a means to an end." A second issue is related to goals for future ministry. Students recognize that they are going to be Church leaders who have to be responsible for a community. They believe their job is to present the tradition in a clear way; they want to know "the answers, the truth." One faculty member observed, "Jesus spoke of 'the way, the truth, and the life'; it is bothersome that some students are concerned only about 'the truth' as they see it."

In their strong desire to bolster their way of thinking, some students want to have the answers to their questions go a certain way; they can get trapped completely in their own subjectivity. Faculty hope to instill critical thinking; students want only to develop fidelity to Church teachings and loyalty to Church leaders. Finally, some students come to the seminary not to study theology but to grow in their faith; this goal is not met equally in all classes. Working through these divergent views of what theological education should do, requires faculty to adjust their expectations and motivate students by use of innovative methods and approaches. They need to accept students where they are and attempt to move them to where they need to be.

Another dynamic creates resistance to learning: what faculty believe to be the perception of students about them and the perception faculty have of students. In the first case, faculty perceive that students who resist learning hold certain negative views about them. Most significant is the lack of authority accorded to faculty; many feel an aura of suspicion surrounds them and their orthodoxy is questioned. "I feel I am mistrusted personally," one person said, and another, "Students have chosen to be obedient to the Pope and not to listen to me. They want to learn only what has an imprimatur." "Students want to argue against a particular author through me," a priest who was teaching systematic theology said, noting that the faculty member becomes the center of attention whenever controversial material is presented. In an effort to establish an alternative view of their own, some students charge that faculty diminish Church doctrine except when it comes from Vatican II. Women especially were conscious of being at a

disadvantage. The feeling was that students prefer a masculine perspective, recognizing that women and men learn and teach differently.

Faculty views of students were no less contentious, but efforts to understand and accommodate students also are evident. Relevant to the latter, one sympathetic faculty member said, "They are often insecure about their faith since they know only a little about many different areas; they are overwhelmed by all they have to learn to become a pastor—from theology to administration." Adding to the problem, they have too much going on to devote adequate time to studies. Moreover, the sexual abuse scandal has lead to uncertainty and fear among students, which seems to result in an even greater desire to be clear about what is right and proper. Because those who are attracted to priesthood generally tend to be more traditional in their religious views and their faith practices, their attitudes are understandable. Many students have been raised on a relativist diet, and they want to have stability, not complexity. If these students are willing to acknowledge their shortcomings and accept correction, faculty see indications of hope for their future ministry.

Not all faculty viewed seminarians with as much sympathy. Of special concern are students who seem extraordinarily self-righteous. "Some students simply say, 'I am right; you are wrong,'" one faculty member lamented, "and then they misinterpret what is said in class and go to the rector, their vocation director, or their bishop to report what they think are problems with what faculty teach. They are exultant about their 'winning' because of the current Church atmosphere." An exasperated moral theology teacher complained, "Some students are so resistant to learning even if you cut a hole in their head, you couldn't pour anything in. They have no time for the speculative nature of theology." Another negative perception revolved around the inadequacy of student preparation for classes. Faculty noted that too often students are given readings that they do not complete and so they are not prepared to participate in discussion; then they say they dislike discussion. They resist this method of instruction in part because it puts them on the spot but also because it can bring out opinions that may be frightening or threatening. Lack of language skills also can be an enormous barrier to learning; many faculty believe it is the fault of the institution for not asking for better language qualifications before students are accepted into theology.

The account by faculty of reasons why students resist learning is far-reaching. Beginning with the backgrounds of students, faculty mentioned a lack of proper educational training, intellectual curiosity, and even basic capacity for graduate study in some cases. In the absence of adequate formation in their faith, students often arrive in seminary with an incomplete vision of the Church and a narrow sense of history. Compounding the limited background of many students is their response to the culture. In a time of confusion and uncertainty young people seek stability and security; they find these in the traditional practices of the Church. This background tends to produce feelings of fear and

threat in any teaching that departs from the expected. The difference between students and faculty about what should be the goals of theological education result in what faculty see as negative perceptions of students about them. Faculty, in turn, are not always positively disposed to the views of students. Nonetheless, faculty have sought ways to be more effective in their teaching and have suggested many innovative approaches to the problem of resistant students.

How can faculty adapt successfully to teach students who are averse to learning new ideas and concepts that have not been part of their backgrounds?

In our interviews with faculty, they offered numerous suggestions about ways to reach students who resist learning that does not harmonize with their preconceived notions about the Church's teachings and functions. Beginning with a careful consideration of the backgrounds of students, faculty made mention of teaching methods that were effective with certain types of students. Their approaches are not always the same; for example, some faculty believe the classroom environment should be comfortable and accepting, while others think more learning takes place when tension and challenge are present. Also faculty recognize the value of making pastoral applications as they teach; to do this, they acknowledge the importance of remaining current with pastoral practice. Finally, faculty mention the usefulness of assistance with teaching from colleagues and outside professionals.

A first step in reaching students is to take into consideration the culture from which they have come. The variations on this theme are as numerous as the students themselves; for example, they may be from urban, suburban, or rural settings, and they may be from North America or from other countries as dissimilar as Vietnam and Poland, or Mexico and Nigeria. Faculty suggested asking students to look at their own heritage to reflect on how it formed them, how it is helpful to them, and how it can create blind spots in their views. They should be invited to tell their stories, explain where they are coming from, and listen to the stories of others in their classes in order to grow in appreciation for their differing needs. Students also should be invited to reflect on how they have changed to date and consider what other changes may be useful for them as they move toward ordination. Eventually students should articulate their own goals and examine whether or not these are compatible with the goals of the seminary and with those of other students, as well as with the Church they hope to serve.

On the part of faculty, they must get to know students by spending time with them outside of class in order to build trust: talk to them, help them lower their defenses, do individual work with them when possible. By being available, approachable, and responsive, faculty can learn about the concerns and fears of students. Some faculty recommend interviewing students during the semester and again at the end to find out what they are learning. One person reflected that he thought problems with students are more often pedagogical than doctrinal, so

"find out what is blocking learning through mid-term assessments or simply asking them in class what would help them learn more effectively."

Starting with orientation days, faculty recommend establishing in students certain attitudes toward learning. Initiate them into the enterprise of theology by making important distinctions between theology, reflection, and catechesis; show how these fit together but also how they have different purposes. Teach them to distinguish between doing theology and learning the teachings of the Church—both good things, but not the same. One faculty member tells students early along, "If you just want the basics, then go to catechism class. The intention here is to reflect on the faith and that is what we are going to do in this school. You will know the teachings of the Church, but you also will learn to reflect theologically." That rather frank statement might not be the most felicitous expression from a student's point of view, but it does convey the mission of the school and the intent of the courses.

A dean said, "I want students to know we want to help them deepen their faith, not destroy it. If they sense that we are not trying to undo their beliefs, but rather make them rethink what they believe and therefore deepen their faith, that is one of the best ways to get them to be more open." It is advisable to let students know that "We are in this together; everyone wants the best for you." By conveying the notion that students and faculty are learning together, not competing, but rather upholding the same faith, progress can be made.

Other practical suggestions for dealing with students early along are helpful. Faculty say they need to explain how they are going to go about their teaching, what they expect of students and what they will not tolerate. Faculty need to have a united front about what is acceptable in classroom discourse. It is obvious, too, that students resent being manipulated or tricked, and faculty should always refrain from gratuitous comments, especially when speaking about what students hold dear. "It is helpful to remember that faculty come from clarity, while students do not," one experienced liturgy professor commented. Faculty can help students become tolerant of the "messiness" of theology through patient explanation. At first it is necessary to "just plow through it." "Drip, drip, drip, one day at a time," an experienced person said, adding somewhat irreverently, "With persistence you can teach them the lunacy of what they hold." Central to these thoughts is being clear about expectations and patient in waiting for response.

Faculty made many specific comments about methods they found beneficial in their teaching. Always be respectful and model in the classroom how people should live as a Christian community. Try to present a balanced approach, not just seeing things from one side; at the same time, do not allow students to put forward only one side of an issue. Rather than immediately criticizing what a student says, ask for clarification or justification; for example, a Scripture professor remarked, "I ask them, 'What do you mean by that "we"?' or 'Who do you mean by "they"?' 'Who or what is actually behind your statement?' I try to get them to step back and see what they are actually saying and how it is being

said." Comparison, critique, and evaluation are also important. Faculty should remember that the point of theological education is not merely to give out information but to provide tools for analysis and ongoing learning.

In a slightly different vein, many people recommended using a variety of methods in order to appeal to different learning styles of students. Some do well with quizzes, while others prefer reflection papers or discussions. Sometimes assigning to small groups students with a mix of backgrounds and viewpoints can open their minds to new ways of thinking. Another way to introduce complex thinking is to team teach, showing how faculty with divergent opinions can discuss issues with each other. Some use a poem where interpretation is essential to understanding; students consider how the poem touches them, challenges them; they have to give their interpretation and then recognize that other views are equally valid. A history teacher suggested role playing historical figures to help students "get inside the heads of people" from another era.

All these efforts are aimed at broadening students' understanding of theological concepts and notions of truth. By assigning certain readings, they can see that Church officials, even cardinals, sometimes disagree on theological issues. "Throughout history Church teachings have not always been clear as a bell and they probably will not be now either," a moral theologian observed. Because of the nature of the issues covered, moral theology is especially sensitive. To get out divergent views, one faculty member asks a student to defend a position that is most like his own and least like it. The same can be accomplished by varying the composition of small groups: sometimes including only those of like mind, sometimes mixing the group to include opposite opinions. Another faculty member said, "I ask questions that have no single right answer; for example, 'What does it mean to be created in the image and likeness of God?'" Others spend time working with a text over several weeks to see how students' understandings develop with new information.

One of the most unexpected outcomes of the interviews was to hear two views of what faculty thought were most effective classroom environments. One style was to create a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom and the other was to set up a more demanding situation.

In the first case, some faculty believed if they set a relaxed and comfortable classroom environment and acted that way themselves, students would thrive. One person said, "I urge them to be more relaxed, even playful about learning, willing to make mistakes. I want them to surrender control, be more childlike. If they loosen up, I think they are freer to learn." Another commented that she wanted to draw out students, bring them to their full potential. She said it was better to "Learn to tame rather than to slay students. Sometimes a more gentle approach, a more subtle approach, works best." Faculty of this persuasion also like to use humor. "I treat them as a unit, making fun of them all in a playful way." These faculty make students feel their questions are worthwhile, so students find it enjoyable to ask questions. Such an open, flexible atmosphere works well for some faculty.

The opposite approach is preferred by other faculty who believe that dissonance can lead to growth. "I don't want to create a too-relaxed atmosphere in the classroom," one fairly new faculty member said. "Sometimes it is confrontation that breaks through and allows communication." One goal of creating such an environment is to teach students to think on their feet by calling on them to respond to questions. "I ask students directly for their opinion, so hidden agendas are less likely to remain hidden. It forces people to think when asked by name to respond to questions." Some of these faculty give provocative lectures to evoke discussion; and they insist that students read different viewpoints on course topics. Energy is created in complexity, and by helping students deal with complicated issues, they are better prepared for what will happen in their future ministry. Conflicting opinions are encouraged in class even when tensions rise. Students are helped when they learn to grapple with paradox. Another experienced teacher said, "I started taking a firmer stand about when and how they do papers and exams. I don't just want their opinions, but also I want to see if they really understand the material, can synthesize and analyze it. That has helped."

Evident in interviews with students as well as with faculty was the significance of pastoral practice or field education in shaping the attitudes of students. Experiential learning is a good way to broaden student views and have them consider issues from the perspectives of those supervising or receiving the ministry. The "outside voice" often carries more weight. Faculty also found that engagement in ministry was a reminder to students of how much their studies have implications for their pastoral ministry; it was a reminder to faculty to teach in a way that will help students be pastorally effective. By creating opportunities for practical application, they begin to focus on key issues in their classes that come up in parishes and other ministry settings. Through the use of pastoral incidents students can explore how they could have done things differently. This experience broadens their concept of what it means to do things "the right way." One example concerns the use of process in class, which some students resist. When they realize how important process is when working in parishes, they become more open to it. One field educator said, "Students begin to see that if they ignore process, their ears are not open to what is being said. They miss the point of involving people for the sake of gaining support." Preparing people for Church leadership creates tension because of tension in the parishes where they will be ministering. Awareness of this reality awakens students to the value of expanding their vision and learning how to dialogue.

Some practical advice came from faculty regarding their sense of confidence about teaching. Experienced faculty members recognize that a person cannot "click" with every class and so a teacher should not be discouraged by one difficult group. When problems arise, certain solutions can be effective with some classes, but they may not work with others. Sometimes using objective tools for teaching, such as videos, a variety of texts, or visiting theologians can take away the singular focus from the teacher. Also remembering that each faculty member

has something to contribute and that no one person has to carry the entire burden for a particular group of students, can relieve the pressure. Sometimes a shift in approaches can overcome difficulties. If it is possible to get on the same "wave length" with a particular group of students by using vocabulary that touches on their experiences and their preferences, tension can sometimes be reduced. At other times, it is important to simply back off and listen when a student seems threatened; arguing with them is seldom effective. Over time faculty usually understand themselves as teachers in deeper ways. Early in one's career or in the midst of a course, it is not always easy to see in which direction things are going, so being patient with the process is important.

In the course of interviewing faculty, we heard several stories about interactions between students and faculty that could be construed as great disrespect, if not abuse of a faculty member by a student. One such behavior is frequent interruption by a student who contradicts everything being taught. A Scripture professor recounted the following: "One student was constantly correcting me, and I was reasonably gracious with that for a while. But, eventually, I let him have it with one text after another. . . . I thought, 'At some point you have to get it through your head that I actually know something.' The only effect it had with the person was he at least shut up and listened and quit correcting me." For faculty, it is necessary to distinguish between resistance and harassment; when a situation becomes harassment, it is no longer a matter of communicating but of managing such a student. "The doctrinally nasty students have to be challenged," one person said. Sometimes these students are disturbed, so a different protocol is necessary; they may be impossible to teach. Faculty tend to be eternally patient with students, but in some cases, action has to be taken to save the course for the other students.

Finally, faculty pointed out ways they discovered to improve their teaching and change their tactics in approaching students who resisted learning from them. Several forms of faculty development were suggested: inviting educational specialists to present new forms of pedagogy, arranging for faculty seminars about teaching, and setting up a program of peer review that focuses not only on what could be improved, but also on what is most effective. One person who regularly reads student theses on religious education has learned some excellent teaching methods through his doctoral students. Mutual support can come from faculty in the same institution, and professional meetings are important places to exchange with peers from other schools about teaching methods. Keeping updated about new approaches to teaching specific to one's field is important. In case of serious problems with students, faculty believe they should be able to ask the institution to provide counseling for the teacher. Whether teaching is going well or problems arise, finding ways to share the successes and failures is valuable.

Conclusion

Faculty were able to name many factors that contribute to problems in teaching students who resist learning. Most obvious are the backgrounds these students bring to the seminary. Their prior education, as well as their innate ability, makes a difference in how they learn, but their early faith formation also enters significantly into the equation. Their knowledge of the impact of the history of the Church is especially important in their willingness to accept change. The social and cultural conditions of the times contribute further to their acceptance of learning theology. Many have experienced confusion about values, or they may be insecure in their personal life and faith, both of which can lead to anger, pain, disappointment, and fear about the future of the Church and to resistance to change. These characteristics affect the way students perceive faculty and faculty perceive students. Finally, faculty and students often aspire to accomplish contradictory goals in their pursuit of theological studies, which can lead to a stalemate in the classroom.

Through experience, faculty have adopted many effective methods for working with these students. They take into consideration the backgrounds students bring to the seminary by getting to know about their heritage and their experiences of education and of Church. Beginning with orientation, faculty seek to instill in students a love of learning and an understanding of what it means to study theology in contrast to learning the catechism. Faculty try to establish a trusting relationship with students and let them know that their goal is to enhance, not destroy, their faith. Clarity about teaching methods and desired outcomes also aid students who may be resistant to learning new material. Employing a variety of methods addresses the needs of students with different learning styles. During the interviews with faculty, responses showed thought-provoking disagreement about what constitutes the most effective classroom environment. Some would favor a relaxed atmosphere while others believe a degree of tension aids the learning process.

A number of faculty highlighted the importance of making pastoral application of theological learning. Recognizing that not all classes will be equally responsive to a particular teacher is reassuring for those who find some experiences of teaching to be quite unsatisfactory. A few faculty shared painful experiences of students who were not respectful. The need to "manage" such students rather than to try endlessly to communicate with them seemed like wise practice. Finally, faculty identified many ways to improve their teaching, for example, through seminars, consultation, and peer interaction.

Faculty Perceptions of Reasons Why Some Students Resist Learning

1. They lack the intellectual capacity and/or the educational background needed for theological studies, such as language skills and exposure to the humanities and the social sciences.

2. They have not had solid faith formation to give them the grounding they need in the tradition; they do not have a broad historical sense of their faith with all its complexity and variation.
3. They enter seminary seeking certainty and security after experiencing a "culture of confusion" and personal dislocation.
4. They are sometimes fearful, anxious, angry, or threatened by the way the Church has changed, and they are concerned about the responsibilities of ministry that await them in this "new" Church.
5. Their goals for theological studies are not the same as institutional goals; for example, they may want to do only what is necessary to be ordained while faculty want them to fully engage their studies so as to enrich their theological background.
6. They are suspicious of the orthodoxy of the faculty and do not trust them; at the same time faculty judge these students to be rigid and narrow.

Faculty suggestions for working successfully with students who resist learning

1. Consider carefully the cultural and religious backgrounds of students, and adapt teaching strategies to the needs of a particular class.
2. Initiate students into the enterprise of theology through carefully planned orientation; point out to them differences among theology, catechesis, and reflection.
3. Assure them that faculty want to deepen their faith, not destroy it; show reverence for the essentials of the faith, while exploring with them various interpretations that are possible within the bounds of orthodoxy.
4. Explain how you intend to go about teaching, what you expect of students, and what you will not tolerate.
5. Be balanced in presenting several sides of controversial issues, and ask them to do the same; be patient in allowing them to expand their horizons.
6. Vary teaching styles so that students are exposed to many approaches to course material; for example, use videos, invite visiting lecturers, and require readings from authors with different opinions.
7. Illustrate how the Church's understanding of doctrine has evolved and developed over the centuries with even Church officials disagreeing at times.
8. Establish a classroom environment that suits students as well as your own style; for example, some prefer a relaxed atmosphere while others like the energy generated by confrontation.
9. Use pastoral experiences to show how course material relates to practical ministerial situations.
10. Recognize that any one member of the faculty will not always be able to "click" with every class or student; other faculty will be able to contribute to the education and formation of students where one individual might fail.
11. Stop disrespectful classroom behavior as soon as it occurs; establish boundaries for what is appropriate and stand by them.

12. Reach out to peers and outside experts to find ways to enhance teaching methods and ideas of how to relate well with students. Ask the institution for the assistance of counselors or advisers when needed.

Closing thoughts

The particular goal of this portion of the research was to identify themes from interviews with students and faculty that would inform understanding about how selected characteristics of students relate to the attainment of educational goals and to future ministry. Our hypothesis was that the religious backgrounds of students, especially their understanding of the nature of authority and their personal religious experiences, would impact how and what they would learn about theology and ministry. Between the bookends of past experience and future ministry stand their years of theological studies. During these critical years, faculty are charged with the responsibility of preparing students for ministerial leadership. Through deeper understanding of how students engage the formation process, we believe this research ultimately will assist faculty in preparing graduates who are able to exercise more effectively their religious vocation.

Insights gained during interviews shed light on the relationship between the background and character of students and the learning process. We found that past religious experiences powerfully shape their studies and their notions of ministry. We learned, for example, that both early religious education and relationships with religious people—be they parents or pastors—form attitudes and mindsets that affect the capacity of students to receive and integrate new information. Those who were trained with rigid or authoritarian views of their faith often carry these understandings into adulthood, and, because of fear, inflexibility, or sincere conviction, they tend to resist ideas or approaches that seem not to fit their framework. Faculty realize that students need to be prepared for ministry among people with diverse views; therefore, they must break through the resistance to learning. In this effort, they have found that patient listening usually wins out over argumentation, sympathetic understanding overcomes hostility, and pastoral experience goes a long way in conquering fear.

Integral to the process and most important for students are self-knowledge and personal growth. These processes develop especially in pastoral settings and other programs that emphasize reflection; the earlier students are introduced to these experiences the more helpful they are. Further, students seem to learn best when they feel assured that their professors are teaching them what is necessary for them to become effective ministers. Faculty who can challenge students to broaden their theological horizons without creating undue anxiety about theological differences seem to have the greatest success in reaching them. By varying the teaching styles and taking into account the religious and cultural backgrounds of students, faculty can overcome some of the uncertainties of students and allay their fears. Faculty who are willing to converse with students outside of class, answer their questions, and respond to their concerns without being

dismissive or defensive help them learn best. Self-understanding and positive interpersonal relationships are key elements of formation.

In the final analysis, our study seems to reveal in new ways familiar dictums that should guide the lives of all Christian educators: understanding the backgrounds of students, gaining their trust, being patient in moving them to new horizons, and treating them always with respect go far in achieving the goal of preparing them well for their future ministry.

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Character and Assessment of Learning for Religious Vocation: Interpreting Protestant Student Voices

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ABSTRACT: This article presents research regarding Protestant MDiv student characteristics affecting the way students receive their education. Researchers conducted interviews at seven Protestant seminaries, including fifty-nine students and fifty-one faculty members. Some characteristics affecting students' education include: educational background, desire to connect faith and life, knowledge and ministry preparation, fear of burn-out, and thinly stretched resources. Many students report that seminary gave them a new framework. Some believe seminary was a transformative agent. The connections between seminary education and leadership preparation are still underdeveloped in some schools.

The project

What are the characteristics and convictions that ministry degree students bring into Protestant ATS member seminaries? How do these characteristics and convictions influence how students receive their seminary education? How are students shaped by their seminary education? These are the foundational questions that we pursued in our research, which is a piece of the larger ATS project on the Character and Assessment of Learning for Religious Vocation. In this article, we will present our research method and the basic questions we asked. Then, while presenting the findings from the research, we will also suggest to faculty members and administrators possible implications of the research for their schools.

Research method

The ATS executive director and program staff, in consultation with the Catholic and Protestant school investigators, composed a list of nine Protestant seminaries that were invited to participate in the research. The seminaries reflected the Association's diversity: freestanding and university related, denominational and nondenominational, racial/ethnic, and geographic. Due to unforeseen circumstances in the life of one investigator, he withdrew from the project, prompting our removal of two schools from the list. Unfortunately, one of those was the only Canadian representative.

Character and Assessment of Learning for Relgious Vocation:
Interpreting Protestant Student Voices

Research took us to each of the seven remaining schools to conduct and tape interviews with individual students, with deans and presidents, and with faculty groups. In preparation for the visits, school staff invited eight to ten second- and third-year students in the MDiv program to be interviewed. We asked deans to select students to include gender and racial/ethnic diversity, plus any other diversities salient at the school. Students completed a written survey prior to the visit. The primary form of data gathering, however, was in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Each interview was tape recorded, with the interviewee's permission, and later transcribed. We interviewed students individually for about fifty minutes each, taking the same amount of time with the dean (and, on occasion, the president). We interviewed faculty in small groups for about seventy-five minutes each. In total, we interviewed fifty-nine students (six to eleven per school, including twenty-nine women and thirty men). The fifty-nine students included eleven African Americans, seven international students, two Native Americans, and one Asian American. We also interviewed fifty-one faculty members, plus the deans.

Below are the basic questions we asked. We would like readers to know the content we sought. This study is, of course, but a sampling of ATS schools. The questions might profitably be used by schools in focus groups with their own students and faculty members.

Qualitative research, with open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews, does not lend itself well to percentages, as in "82.5 percent of respondents answered A and 17.5 percent answered B." Consequently, in order to present findings, we looked for repeated words, concepts, and patterns. Then, using our best judgments, we imagined categories in which to present findings. We seldom use percentages, but each response we report is a composite response, representing multiple persons, in multiple schools. We include quotes that we believe fairly represent a group of respondents.

The interviews: Student questions

Interview questions were composed in consultation with ATS staff and the Catholic investigators. We probed in areas we thought would best elicit data relevant to our questions regarding student character and conviction as these affect and are shaped by theological education. The basic questions, not including follow-up questions and derivative questions, were:

- ♦ Tell us about the journey that brought you to seminary.
- ♦ Thinking back to the first term, how well prepared did you feel to be here, what were the major transitions, and who and what helped you make the transitions?
- ♦ Tell us about your educational experiences here: a particular educational experience, outstanding courses and teaching, and less powerful courses and teaching.

- ♦ For what kind of leadership are you preparing, what is required for that kind of leadership, and how has your education contributed to your preparation as a leader?
- ♦ Has seminary challenged your core beliefs and convictions? When you compare your beliefs and convictions when you entered seminary with where you are now, what has been affirmed? What has changed?

The interviews: Faculty and dean questions

From faculty and deans, we were most concerned to learn:

- ♦ What is your sense of your students, the joy you find in them, the concerns you have for them, the way they understand their vocations?
- ♦ Tell us how you understand your vocation as a professor in a theological seminary.
- ♦ What seems to be working well in your teaching?
- ♦ What issues and concerns do you have regarding teaching the students at your school?
- ♦ Tell us about how you understand the church for which you are preparing students.
- ♦ How do you understand seminary education as leadership education? How do you think your understanding is congruent with or differs from what denominational and congregational leaders are asking for in seminary graduates?

Findings

In the following, we ask the reader to keep the following twin judgments in mind: *Given the amount of stress students suffer, an amazing amount of learning is occurring*. And, *given the amount of stress faculties suffer, an amazing amount of education is being offered*. We could write the entire article about the stressors in seminary life. They are legion. There may be an ATS school where students have the *leisure* to learn and faculties have the same to learn, conduct research, and teach—but not among those we visited. Time, energy, and attention were all stretched, with schools and students operating at a very high burn rate. Personally, we were impressed by how much good education seems to be taking place in each school.

Best fun quotes—with a serious point

In determining findings from qualitative, interview research, it is important to present the typical responses rather than those that are most interesting to the researchers. We have done our best to follow this rule. The following quotes, while stated in a humorous way (the emphases are ours), colorfully typify thoughts and sentiments we heard often:

♦ "Begin with the practical courses. Never begin with Greek!" **Students enter seminary with different interests and can experience resistance within a rigorously sequenced curriculum**.

♦ From a student who thought more of seminary education should be focused on spiritual formation: "There are a lot of people that, when you say you don't need two full years of systematic theology, *it is just like you called and said their mother is ugly*." **This comment exemplifies a conflict, not only a creative tension, between students' experience of seminary as formation for ministry and intellectual preparation for ministry—as if these are two separate and not wholly related forms of education.**

♦ A student who self-described as "liberal orthodox evangelical": "I love to rest in orthodox confessions of the church *while not necessarily saying those things have to be normative*." **Students customize their education, to receive it on their own terms**.

♦ A faculty member, who found he needed to be very specific about assignments: "The first time I assigned a research paper to do some research on the Ten Commandments, I asked the students to look at twentieth century scholars. I must not have been clear enough because a lot of them chose Dr. Laura's book on the Ten Commandments!" **A common faculty observation, if not complaint (and, at times, a complaint from students who begin seminary with an undergraduate religion degree), is that students arrive at seminary with greatly differing levels of preparation for being there**.

The student experience

Preparedness, transitions, and helps

A major objective of this research project was to find out how students' backgrounds (values, education, work experiences) influenced their learning at seminary. One question we asked was to what extent they felt prepared as they entered seminary. Students come from a diversity of academic and social-cultural backgrounds, and each level of preparation presents a particular set of challenges in the initial transition to seminary life.

Second-career (nontraditional) students. Second career students often feel a deep sense of personal inadequacy in their first semester. They frequently wonder if they can handle the academic demands of theological study, especially if they had been away from school for ten or more years. One student confided that seminary "made me very nervous." Another student felt helpless, preoccupied by a single thought through the first few weeks of class: ". . . am I grasping what I need because everything is flying at me?"

A second struggle is the challenge of balancing home and study. One student, a father, commented, "I just needed to keep sanity about me so I can learn." Another student who is a homemaker, wife, and mother of a child recalled how she broke down one day.

> I know that I became very frustrated at times. I remember one
> incident where I was in my kitchen, I had just gotten home and
> my husband . . . came in and I was just sobbing in the kitchen. He
> said, "What's wrong?" And I said, "I just need a moment of
> breakdown, then I'll be all right."

Many of these students report having very supportive spouses and family. Students shared how their spouses believed in them and willingly shared many of the duties of housework and parenting so they could study.

Some nontraditional students felt a little out of place in the classroom because, in their perception, they are older than the typical seminary student. However, they also claim that their maturity and life experience gave them an edge. They realized that they bring a different and often valuable perspective to class discussions. Indeed, younger students often looked to them for guidance, advice, and support because of their maturity.

Despite these transition challenges, nontraditional students are determined. Come what may, these students were adamant about completing their theological studies. With a clear sense of God's call, they wanted to be theologically prepared for the tasks ahead. Many of these students felt a deep sense of contentment and peace in what they have undertaken.

Most schools provided some kind of writing seminars to help them adjust to academic studies. One school developed a six-week course on writing and academic study, which students valued highly. Another school had a writing center that provided tremendous resources in research and writing. Students also deeply appreciated feedback from professors for their first assignments.

Many students talked about the value of a good support group during this time of transition. In one school, the administration formed "Ministry Study Groups" in the first year of study. These support groups lasted for two years. With one faculty and one local pastor as resource persons, group members learned to share, pray, and care for one another each week. Members shared their faith journeys in the first year and discussed case studies from their field experiences in the second year. In one institution where this structure was in place, students often alluded to the immense pastoral benefit of this regular small group experience through the initial transition period.

Students with science, engineering, and business backgrounds. Students with science, engineering, or business backgrounds face a different set of transition problems. A major challenge is writing a theological paper. Students from science and engineering backgrounds are more familiar with the "certitude of the sciences" and thus they wrestle with the "ambiguity and philosophical approaches" of theological studies—an epistemological challenge. Business majors are not exempt from this challenge. One student, who wrote and supervised the implementation of major business proposals before coming to seminary, shared that she had to rewrite her papers many times. What she found hardest was the demand to think theologically about what she was writing.

The provision of writing centers and detailed feedback by caring and understanding professors were important helps. Students also mentioned meeting with peers over lunch at school. These often serendipitous meetings become helpful learning sessions. One student shared that she would always bring a bag lunch on the day of her lectures, so she could review, discuss the lessons, and get excellent insights.

Students with liberal arts and humanities backgrounds. While these students have the important skills of reading, writing, and critical thinking, they grapple with a different set of adjustment issues. Some struggle deeply with the critical orientation to textual and theological studies. One student shared how listening to a funded lecture series in the seminary in her first year shattered her confidence in seminary studies. The visiting scholar presented an "academic, threatening perspective to faith" (the scholar presented the resurrection as a perceived event). However, students with an early disorienting experience judged that, in time, professors understood their struggles and helped them "reclaim faith." Students realize that the goal was not to dismantle faith but to encourage a "meaningful ownership of faith." Many students expressed that they appreciated the exposure to various theological perspectives and the "stretching experience." They said they preferred going through the crucible in school, rather than when they are outside facing the congregation and public.

Students with Bible and religion backgrounds. The most common struggle with this group of students in their transition period is that introductory courses, covering methods and material already familiar to them, did not challenge them.

One student remarked, "I was very frustrated by what I felt were a lack of challenge and the almost regressive teaching." Another mentioned that much of the introductory biblical and theological courses were "repetitive and redundant." One student even questioned why she was in seminary "because it felt a lot like a step back."

These students were unaware of any significant attempts, either by professors or by the administration, to help them. These students did offer that they realized the professors had to cover basics in order to bring less well-prepared students up to speed. Students who were best prepared, academically, to be in seminary felt more academically challenged only in their second or third years.

International students. As international students adapt to the foreign culture and sometimes harsh weather, they often grapple with entirely new social values (e.g., individualism and the relative freedom of women in church and society). However, their great struggle is working with the English language, and, in their perception, they often take double the time to complete reading and writing assignments.

The greatest helps for them are writing centers (previously mentioned) and understanding professors. They especially appreciate professors who empathize with their struggles and provide encouragement. One international student who was part of a "ministry support group" shared that this was one of the most important supports in the first months of very challenging seminary life. That

being said, there was surprisingly little mention of supportive on-campus peer relationships.

Outstanding teaching and learning

Which factors make for effective teaching and learning? We wanted to learn about the varieties of learning events and how professors, from a student perspective, shaped their educational landscape for effective teaching.

Connection to real life. In this section of the research, we were expecting to find factors such as professors who were adept with a variety of teaching methods or have a practical understanding of learning styles. However, what emerged from student reflections was somewhat surprising.

The most common factor cited in outstanding educational experiences was a professor's ability to connect learning to real life. One student, speaking for many in our interviews said, "My criterion is, How will I be able to use this in the parish?" But the connection to life involved far more than immediate usefulness, and student reflections on connection to life crisscrossed the curriculum. In fact, many examples were from foundational biblical and theological studies.

One student said of a professor in biblical studies, "The readings and lectures were excellent. I loved that he raised the bar so high and had such high expectations about digging deeply into the Gospels and work at it. Not just mentally, but really engage our whole beings with the text and the Gospel, let it be a mirror into our souls." Several students at one seminary shared how they were deeply influenced by the same theology course, because the assignments encouraged the integration of learning and life. In this course, the professor had students select a theological doctrine for personal study and gave the following assignment:

1. write an annotated bibliography quoting six sources (three ancient and three modern),
2. lift that doctrine in a book of worship they were using,
3. exegete three Scripture texts,
4. incorporate these findings while crafting a sermon.

One student said of this creative assignment, "It was excellent. . . . We had these threads in various pieces of our theological and liturgical development culminating in proclaimed work."

Frames and lenses for thinking. The second most common factor contributing to outstanding educational experiences was a professor's ability to shape a student's perspective. In particular, students deeply appreciated a professor who provided a framework in which students could understand both the discipline being taught and the data of their lives. We often found students using the metaphor of "lens" in their responses. One student said of a Black Church Studies course, "It was a blessing to take that class. It so refocused my lens on how I see the world. Nothing is the same anymore. . . . [The professor] taught us how to think theologically." Another student said of a New Testament course, "that one class just broke me loose to see things now the way they really are." An international

student described how Spiritual Formation and Discipleship provided the theological bases to interpret his previous, powerful spiritual experiences. He said that in his home country, believers "have the heart for Jesus," but they "cannot teach you a lot. I could combine them now."

The professor's life. A third factor in outstanding educational experiences is that of the life of a professor. Students are positively affected when professors are vulnerable, open, and honest about their own life and faith struggles. One student recalled how a professor was "vulnerable to us through relating personal experiences. This professor was authentic." Another student described the congruence she discerned in the professor, ". . . and he is a word weaver. He is just a delight to listen to. But because he has a fundamentally godly character, his character comes through. . . ." Students appreciate professors who are not just a store of information but are fundamentally human.

> One thing that I really enjoy is when the professors share that they are human. If they were in the parish, that they share stories that relate to the texts and the Bible or some theology. . . . Rather than just be there as someone who is just going to teach, but someone with a heart, rather than someone who just has a wealth of information.

The professor's passion. Another factor in powerful educational experiences, perhaps the one mentioned most often, is the passion teachers bring to their classes. One student said, "He was impassioned . . . never a moment that he did not connect . . . maybe not even ten minutes would go by when he did not forcefully remind us what is at stake with theological reflection." Students often share judgments with one another regarding who the best teachers are on a seminary campus. Indeed, sometimes students would go so far as to say that a seminary experience is incomplete without a class with a particular professor, because he or she is so deeply passionate about the subject. One student commented:

> . . . [Professor's name] is one that everyone talks highly of. . . . What makes him that way is that he has an obvious passion for his teaching. I couldn't imagine (whether you disagree with him or not), I couldn't imagine not enjoying his class because (1) he makes the topic interesting and (2) he really loves what he is presenting and is really passionate about that.

Another student commented, "If he believes strongly in something, then I need to decide if I am going to take hold of that as well." We found this quotation particularly interesting because passion for a subject not only makes teaching powerful, but it can also get a student interested enough in a subject to consider its importance in the overall theological curriculum.

Broad pedagogical repertoire. Certainly, an important factor in powerful learning experiences is a teacher's pedagogical repertoire. Students notice a professor who is adept with a variety of creative approaches in class (students cited use of media, lecture, discussion, small group, and visuals). They appreciate *pedagogy that engages them actively* in the process of learning. One student highlighted a powerful learning experience with her New Testament class. "She

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wanted us to dig into the text so we could unearth all the surprises ourselves." In a class on preaching, one student said, ". . . in learning how to preach, we felt we had just been preached to and filled . . . students come out and feel fired up about the Gospel."

Field education and clinical pastoral education (CPE). Field education and CPE were noted as powerful learning experiences, because students were "taking the knowledge and putting it to use." These learning modes emphasize engaged learning, application, reflection, and integration. One student said that "doing fieldwork was very powerful; it was taking something from class and using it." Another commented that field education was a place to "digest" a lot of what she was learning. One student said that the CPE experience revealed that the "things I was learning in class actually related to the lives of people." In addition, some students reported that field education powerfully affirmed their pastoral vocation; field ed provided an experience in which to practice theory learned in the classroom.

Discussion and dialogue. Another factor that was important to learning was the use of discussion and dialogue in class. Students appreciate good discussion because it "internalizes" ideas. One student said that adult learners "do not like to be lectured to without a chance of sharing their opinions." Discussion also inspires students to explore other possibilities in their search for truth. One student highlighted that at times you are in "discussion and dialogue with people who have such a wide variety of thoughts and experiences." Another student said, "You walk away with more than just lectures or class materials."

Perhaps the most striking quotation comes from a student who shared how her professor, through the use of discussion learning, affirmed her humanness. ". . . he allows his students to express themselves . . . it makes me more of a human, more of a person."

Less effective educational experiences: Student concerns

We were also interested in factors, from a student perspective, that inhibited learning. Please note that, unless we are clearly making our own comments or presenting suggestions that faculty members offered on the same topic, the following remarks represent student perspectives.

Unused or excessive readings. Students mentioned that, with the heavy workload in the seminary curriculum, it is often easy to cut corners. One student said, "I have found that there are ways to push yourself really hard and get far ahead of your classmates if you really want to, and there are ways to slip through the cracks if you want to as well. And I think people do that." Students requested that professors hold them accountable for their readings. Two suggestions are to weave these readings into the lecture or to get students to discuss their readings in class.

Faculty acknowledged the problem of students not reading their material and expressed some concern. One faculty member shared that she used to require reading notations but she ended up with lots of grading. Perhaps the better

alternative is still to incorporate readings into the lecture and/or to provide time for students to discuss them in class.

Content-heavy courses. Another factor that limits learning relates to "content-heavy" courses, without handles or frames. Students were frustrated that in some courses, there was "so much material concentrated into a very short three-month class," that professors missed the more important overall themes and stories. One student commented, "There was lots of interesting material in the course, but we were concentrating on memorizing all the dates." Sometimes, students become so preoccupied with learning data that they have no attention left to do anything with it. One student shared of one course, "There was so much information there and I wasn't sure how to synthesize it with my theological stuff. . . . It was just kind of know this . . . learn this, and get on with it." One older student made a poignant comment about her history course. "The part I have found so difficult is that there is just such an incredible amount of reading and writing to do, and my retention is not what it used to be. I mean I have heard young people complain about that too, so I can't say it is specifically age." While history was not the only course mentioned here, it was perhaps the most commonly cited in this category.

Lack of preparation, dated materials, lack of fit. These were occasional complaints. Students pointed out that a lack of preparation by professors can significantly reduce the quality of the learning experience. This is evidenced in a variety of ways:

1. allowing the class to discuss in ignorance,
2. lack of a clear definition of terms,
3. class that lacks direction and content,
4. class that is disorganized, unstructured, and in which the professor just "rambles" on.

Apart from a lack of preparation, there is the quality of the learning material. Students shared that they were discouraged by professors who issued syllabi that were "three decades old." Some professors "spoke in Christian clichés of the 1950s. . . ."

Another problem was material that students cannot relate to their own contexts. For example, in some preaching classes, African-American students felt dismissed by the style of preaching the class demanded. Students of Chinese and Latino backgrounds noted that professors were sometimes unaware of the particular contexts and needs of immigrant churches.

Too little life and ministry mentoring. We found a discernible voice among students that the seminaries are not paying enough attention to mentoring. They feel that while the seminary claims spiritual formation as one of its major goals, it is more "lip service" than actual reality. The spiritual life of students seems to be compromised as the focus of seminary is often on fulfillment of academic criteria. One student expressed her frustration this way:

> What frustrates me the most is being so swamped with work sometimes…I feel like my spiritual life has suffered in the process. . . . It has been a pretty common complaint with a lot of students, and I have heard that from clergy in general. You get so sucked into the work load that you have that it is so easy to neglect those things. . . . I feel there is not enough built into the program to sort of foster more of that spiritual development. I think there is more lip service paid to it than there is actual attention given to it.

Another student, aware of some of the pitfalls associated with the seminary experience, did extensive reading before he enrolled as a student. What he saw confirmed what he read.

> . . . what I saw were these first-year students entering seminary with these bright eyes, full of zeal and passion for God and ministry. And then gradually seeing those bright eyes becoming duller until they are just in the daily grind of getting through papers, assignments at seminary. And eventually an evolution takes place, so that by the third year these students have matured, they are stronger and they are wiser, but they have never really recaptured the fire in their eyes. It is more "get me out of here!" And I wonder if that is the sort of people we want to send out into the harvest field if they have lost the real fire?

He continues, ". . . seminary becomes a rote exercise, where you pass the test and forget the information. A frequent comment of students is, 'OK, I am just going to get through, get my grade, and get out of that class.'"

Students believe that professors care. There is the seminary community and the interaction, but students judge that daily conversations are generally about how they are doing with the academic work rather than with pressing issues of ministry. Yet, it is the latter which many students long for—a more mentored response from faculty. One student's comment is poignant:

> We are all trying to figure out what we are doing here, and where we are going, and how we are going to get there, and how we are going to be good at it. And I feel as though a lot of times unless we have red flags all over us, the professors don't really interact with us in that way. They interact with us about, here is what we can teach you, but I sometimes need more, especially as a woman in ministry going into a field where I know I will be facing various viewpoints on that. So more substantial help in who you are and what you are called for, this is what we see developing in you, your gifts.

Students provided two suggestions. One is for professors to provide two or three office hours a week to talk about nonclassroom issues, personal issues that they struggle with in ministry. A second suggestion is for seminaries to host "pastors-in-residence" to help students discern God's call, because seminary is "a tumultuous season in life and the future looks scary."

Student characteristics
affecting their reception of theological education

The following list represents categories we created to organize the data regarding how what students bring to seminary affects how and what they receive. The above section reported factors in professors and classrooms that students found most and least helpful for their own learning. In the list below, we attempt to name the student characteristic that underlies the students' responses.

1. *Educational background.* We mentioned this factor above.
2. *Level of vocational clarity.* When we asked students about their most and least profound learning experiences, they often mentioned whether they went into a course with a strong or weak interest in the subject matter. While a professor might turn a student's interest on or off, the student's interest is key. That interest is affected by what students think they are doing in seminary and by the image of the kind of ministry for which they are preparing.
3. *Capacity and interest in dealing with difference:* theological, cultural, racial/ethnic, gender, lifestyle. Some students sought out a particular seminary in order to push themselves out of the comfort zone in which they were raised. Such students tend to revel in difference. Students without such interest may raise defenses (but see below for stories of change).
4. *A deep desire to connect knowledge with life experience and competence in ministry.* We reported how important it is for students that faculty are able to connect the subject and life. Students often mentioned this factor as essential for their learning, regardless of whether the course was in a so-called "practical" subject or in one of the classical disciplines. The desire for teachers to be passionate about their subject also connects here. There is an assumption regarding the connection between passion, vitality, and the heart of life. Students may forgive a teacher's lack of knowledge before they would a lack of passion for the subject.
5. *Time, energy, attention, money.* With very few exceptions, the students we interviewed are living life at a very high expense level for all four of these resources.
6. *Suffer-ability.* An old meaning of the word "suffer" is to be vulnerable to change. Some students come into seminary willing to suffer—to stretch and translate to receive the education offered. They may come from backgrounds and are headed for ministries that differ from the school's mainstream. They will work hard for their learning. Others expect professors to lay the goods squarely on their plate and are either unable or unwilling to translate. While we have uncovered some of the factors that may be linked to one attitude or the other, it would be well to conduct more research on this question of suffer-ability (using a more felicitous term).
7. *Fear of burn-out.* Students have heard many stories (from professors?) regarding burned-out clergy, those who lost their vocational moorings and drifted

with the congregations they served into unfaithfulness. When students press for more spiritual formation or better integration of spiritual and intellectual formation, they express their desire to avoid slipping down that path.

Possible implications for seminaries of student characteristics and learning

What are the possible practical, administrative, and classroom implications of these findings?

1. Entering seminary is a predictably stressful experience, and in multiple ways. What can schools do to acknowledge this and equip students to cope with or ease the pain?
2. What is the curriculum that the *faculty* need to master in order to teach these students well? Could we designate and train particular faculty as master initiators to help students over the limina they encounter?
3. First-term students need challenges *and* confidence builders.
4. Pay attention to how the racial/ethnic students at your school receive their education. A student's quietness and attentiveness may not equal reception.
5. How can schools both remediate some incoming students and advance others?
6. How can we honor both the needs of formation for ordained ministry and for lay professionals in the same degree programs?
7. Search for teachers who . . . (please read "tongue-in-cheek"):
   ♦ Are available 24/7/365, and engaged in their own research.
   ♦ Are intellectually deep, appropriately vulnerable, wise.
   ♦ Can relate any biblical or theological concept to everyday, practical ministry—as in *my* ministry, the one *I* think *I* know, *my* experience of *my* tradition.
   ♦ Will couple their knowledge of me with great examples that appeal to me.
   ♦ Are sensitive to all the learning styles among the students, switching effortlessly and gracefully between them as the situation requires and demonstrating great creativity at all times.
   ♦ Are accomplished in: lecture; Socratic method; discussion; using PowerPoint; 50-minute, 3-hour, and weekend intensives; online or two-way video conferencing.
   ♦ Are challenging but not exhausting.
   ♦ Only assign readings for which students will be held accountable.

Seminary as leadership education?

One of the more remarkable consistencies among the students we interviewed was that, in six of the seven schools, the majority of students were preparing for pastoral leadership in congregations. That being said, we had to work very hard to piece together the answers to our questions about leadership

into a presentable picture—with some exceptions. Students and faculty both were not as articulate answering questions about seminary as leadership education as they were about the other areas of inquiry. At three schools, when we asked about leadership and seminary education, the students pointed to *a* course—and whether or not they had taken it. What we are suggesting is that the connection between seminary education and leadership in ministry was not clear with students or with faculties—in four of the seven schools.

In the following, we rely both on the interviews per se, as well as on written responses to questions regarding what they would like to see changed in today's church and what from the past they wish the church still had or practiced.

Students named the following, multiple times, as enemies of today's church: biblical, historical, and theological ignorance; individualism; entertainment culture; disempowered laity; burned-out, spiritually dead pastors; distracting church conflicts; comfortableness; and busyness.

Roles, knowledge, and skills that leaders ought to possess include: functioning as theologians in particular contexts, framing everyday life theologically, being a teacher (this was mentioned frequently), being a catechist fostering biblical literacy, helping discipleship formation, and fostering more community and less individualism. We were impressed how often students lifted up the teaching role as foundation for pastoral identity.

In several cases, students remarked on leadership as "taught" in the school's implicit curriculum. How do the faculty teach (e.g., lecture only, listening, real discussion, warm-up discussion, evidence of self-integration, examples used, individuals and teams)? How is conflict handled in the classroom and in the seminary community? What kind of leadership opportunities does the school make available? Who leads worship?

On the subject of leadership, two schools were clearly different from the rest and very different from each other. In both of them, their publicly stated leadership emphases clearly reverberated, positively (for the most part), through the faculty and the students. In one setting, the school seeks to form theological interpreters to and for the church. Students offered many classroom examples evidencing the faculty's aptitude for connecting the discipline, life, and ministry. But leadership language, per se, was either avoided or compartmentalized. The other school professed to educate missional leaders formed in partnership with the church, a partnership that affected the whole curriculum.

Possible implications regarding seminary as leadership education

Our research regarding seminary as leadership education suggests two questions to us:

1. How has your school addressed the difference between education for an individual (e.g., can you interpret a text?) and education for leadership (e.g., how does a leader help a congregation to interpret a text?)?

2. What are the ecclesiological assumptions regarding the church for which students are preparing that faculty members embed in their teaching? A related question: what are the ways the faculty understand the seminary and church to be a partnership, including their understandings of the bridge traffic flow (e.g., what could the seminary learn from congregations, from church leaders? What do church leaders need to learn from the seminary?)?

Core convictions, learning, and change in seminary

Seminary faculty and administrators, accreditation societies, financial supporters, judicatory leaders, congregants, and students themselves would like to think that seminary makes a positive difference for the church, that seminary "adds value" to ecclesial leaders. School mission statements and faculty members envision seminary as a transformational experience for students. What difference does seminary make?

Student responses indicate that seminary does make a difference, a real and positive difference. They used many different expressions to describe that difference. The reader is cautioned not to try to add the following percentages to total one hundred. The categories we are using overlap respondents (e.g., some students spoke both about acquiring a framework and becoming less defensive; see below).

Nearly half of the student respondents used a structural metaphor: *seminary provided a framework or structure for previously held beliefs*. "I have better reasons for holding the beliefs I have." Seminary helped them connect heart and head, to articulate the previously inarticulate. For such students, crossing the threshold into seminary and the effort to learn the required vocabulary was essential to their intellectual development. That vocabulary is a crucial component of the framework.

When we pressed (which we tended to more during the latter schools visited than among the earlier ones), however, *most of these students said their core convictions did not change*. They were better formed, better organized, better expressed—but not fundamentally changed. A younger student, on student conversations: "It is interesting to listen to cafeteria conversations. It is not always about [local pro football team] or the weather, it is about theological framing." A mid-30s student with strong church background: "The training here has given an intellectual backbone to what I've always believed in my heart." A 50-something student with decades of business experience: "I am thinking theologically about things that I would have previously considered practical matters …But in terms of world view and basic tenets I hold regarding justice and mercy, those are reinforced but not changed."

About one in six students responded clearly that core beliefs and convictions did change. As we mentioned above, "I was given new lenses through which to see" was one way of saying this. Changes included God metaphors and self-under-

standings, especially as emerged in educational encounters with "an other," often a person of a different race or from a different country. One student, who grew up in the church: "I think my basic convictions and frameworks were not actually formed until I came here." A second career student who came to seminary after recovering from a major illness and used seminary to rebuild her belief system: "Seminary has helped me to own a faith that I did not grow up with . . . It has shaped my faith by making me take a hard look at my own life."

Then there were responses such as this one—hard to interpret. A mid-life student, taking a Bible class and listening to the professor talk about the biblical actor's transformation: "I finally realized the whole seminary thing is about being transformed. Your knowledge, your thinking, your writing." The student went on to say that both church history and ethics were also transforming. But the student then concluded the interview saying that seminary had affirmed his or her faith and, "I haven't had any big changes in my religious convictions."

Almost another one in six students used phrases like seminary "rattled my cage" or "shook my foundations." It is not always clear to what end.

A sizeable portion of the students also used language of ignorance, humility, and formation. About one-fourth spoke of being introduced to a breadth and depth of ecclesial wisdom and events that they previously did not know existed. *One in six said, and many more inferred, that they are leaving seminary less defensive, less fearful of difference, more respectful of others*. A student with a master's degree in religion who came to seminary after twelve years in ministry: "I am just more interested in understanding what people believe. If they are interested in what I believe, I am happy to tell them. But I don't feel the need to convince them that my way is right and their way is wrong." A student in his or her late twenties with a church background and minor in theology: because of the cognitive dissonance between self and school, the student spent the first year "blocking," a second year considering ("I took it all in and kind of lost myself"), and the third year trying to integrate.

And students at every school used the language of formation, especially in reference to field education and through programs designated by the school as formation per se.

Concluding questions and comments

Is an implicit curriculum undermining our stated intentions? Recall the student we quoted above who saw students' attitudes in the course of seminary shift from enthusiasm to survival. A faculty member (from a different school from the student), after remarking on the increased expectations built into the seminary's and the church's curricula today, as compared with a few decades ago, mused:

> I have a sense when I talk with seniors, many of them say "this
> has been a stimulating, intellectual, theological experience. But
> this has been the worst time of my life." One of our DMin students

did a study of the primary relationships of our students who live in seminary housing. The study was just devastating in terms of the emotional, relational, and spiritual toll on our students and those with whom they have their primary relationships. What hasn't happened yet is that the key people who need to sit at the table and ask, What do we, in fact, want in the development of our leaders—not just theologically or strategically or in terms of the practice of ministry but in terms of attitude and enculturation of leadership? We just have not asked that question in a thorough-going, holistic fashion.

What is required of students in seminaries? What is required of seminaries in the ecology of education for leadership in the church? We believe that seminaries, their host denominations and related judicatory leaders, and students could profit from engaging the following conversational topics:

♦ What is the character and what are the essential topics of the conversation between seminary and church leaders?

♦ If your denominational context is full of anxiety, who is paying attention to the seminary responding appropriately rather than reacting anxiously itself?

♦ For what kind of church is the faculty preparing students?

♦ What if we are approximating the best we can do, given the resources and the models in which we live? Is the current level of performance of schools and graduates acceptable? Desirable? If not, given the already demanding nature of seminary life (in terms of time, money, energy, and attention), how can we make the right changes that will not (in the words of one seminary leader) "simply add more sand to the bags"?

Finally, we ask: given the churches' leadership needs, the preparation and convictions students bring to seminary, and our shared standards regarding "deepening spiritual awareness, growing in moral sensitivity and character " (Statement 4.1.1)[1]: *how much time would it take* to develop these? In the 1996 Standards, when we added these elements, did we also include the requisite resources in our schools' and the students' lives to develop them to the extent that we want and that the church needs?

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ENDNOTE

1. The Association of Theological Schools, "Goals of the Theological Curriculum," *Bulletin 46,* Part 1 (2004): 54.

Learning from the First Years: Noteworthy Conclusions from the Parish Experience of Recent Graduates of ATS Schools

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ABSTRACT: "The first five years" of pastoral ministry has, in recent years, led to the emergence of a remarkable body of literature. Denominational offices and research institutes have given considerable attention to what has gone well (and less than well) for graduates of ATS schools. Although the research comes from diverse sources, there are recurring themes; as a whole the literature strengthens the argument of many that theological education is at its best when pastoral formation arises from an intentional partnership between the theological school and the congregation.

In the fall of 2003, we were invited to conduct a study on the relative strengths and weaknesses of recent graduates from Master of Divinity (MDiv) programs in ATS accredited schools. Our assignment was second-order research: a review of literature on this subject and interviews with the directors of research centers who had given focused attention to this question.

We approached the task asking how this research might inform the way in which curricula have or should be developed. Our reference in this regard was the ATS degree program standard for the MDiv program. With respect to this standard, we were asked to reflect on what ATS schools are doing well but especially where there might be room for improvement. We were also asked to make recommendations as to what programmatic response to this research might be appropriate for ATS schools.[1]

It was not long into our study when two things impressed us. First, we recognized that we had at our disposal a remarkable resource in the quality and breadth of the research evident by the collection of essays and publications that have addressed the initial years of pastoral ministry and the potential implications for theological education. Second, and just as significant, we were struck by the presence of recurring themes that made it relatively easy to conclude with "this is what the research is saying." And while there is nothing new here *per se*—the research substantiates the instincts of theological educators across the ATS (both faculty and administrators)—when taken as a whole, one cannot but conclude that this is a collection of voices that needs to be heard. There is wisdom here that

needs to inform not just the curricula of our theological schools—we are all too prone to try to "fix things" by revising the curriculum and adding a course here and there—but rather the whole of the way we do theological education.

In the ATS Standards, Standard 4, The Theological Curriculum, specifies that the curriculum is to cultivate a "deepening spiritual awareness, growing in moral sensibility and character, gaining an intellectual grasp of the tradition of a faith community, and acquiring the abilities requisite to the exercise of ministry in that community."[2] What this encapsulates is the broad consensus among ATS schools and in the literature we have reviewed that the strengths and capacities necessary for effective pastoral ministry include:

♦ Comprehension of the Scriptures and the theological tradition of a faith community.

♦ The capacity to see and understand how this faith tradition will be lived within contemporary social, economic, and cultural contexts.

♦ The ability to perform the critical skills of pastoral ministry, including teaching, preaching, the administration of congregational programs, and the sacraments.

♦ And, last but perhaps most important, candidates and those committed to pastoral ministry are persons of faith, integrity, character, and the capacity to grow in wisdom.

There is little debate that the curricula of theological schools need to cultivate "knowing, being, and doing." What is less clear is how these three dimensions of pastoral formation are integrated, treated, and cultivated as a whole and then, in turn, how all three are oriented toward effective pastoral ministry. For example, one of the recurring themes in the research of seminary graduates is that they can only serve effectively in congregational leadership if they have cultivated the capacity to respond to and manage conflict graciously. This capacity involves managing the relational side of congregational life (the need, as David Roozen has put it, for "expressive, affective authority").[3] Conflict is the norm within congregations. Thus, Jackson Carroll observes, the cultivation of the capacity for good communication needs to be balanced by elements within the curriculum that cultivate relational capacities and the capacity to engender trust.[4]

Between fall 2000 and winter 2003, Duke University published *The Pulpit and Pew Studies: Research on Pastoral Leadership.*[5] Each of those studies was both interesting and instructive, but we considered two that were directly related to our purposes: *What Do Lay People Want in Pastors?* and *What is Good Ministry?* In the executive summary to *What Do Lay People Want in Pastors?* criteria are offered and the choices were considered "a 'gestalt' of pastoral attributes." We propose that some qualities that are sought have implications and suggestions of answers for the questions we explore in our research:

♦ Demonstrated competence and religious authenticity

♦ Good preacher and leader of worship

♦ Strong spiritual leader

- ♦ Commitment to parish ministry and ability to maintain boundaries
- ♦ Authentic, approachable pastor with good "people skills"
- ♦ Consensus builder, lay ministry coach, and responsive leader
- ♦ Entrepreneurial evangelists, innovators, and transformational reflexive leaders.

In the discussion that was ongoing in *What is Good Ministry?* Thomas Long, one of the contributors, reflected on and listed the ingredients of good ministry and presented challenges for our work on what constitutes faithful ministry:

- ♦ Connects the faith community to the activity of God in the world
- ♦ Responsive to and expressive of a developing theological tradition
- ♦ Rethinks the theological tradition, allowing the highway between creed and community religious practice to go in both directions
- ♦ Belongs to a particular community of people but recognizes that ministry is not isolation.

Perhaps the significant contribution these portraits and essays make is the affirmation that there are no easy answers, but there are more questions. Indeed, our own research confirmed that ongoing and creative explorations into relationships between seminary and church, especially local congregations, can only enhance the common ministry we share.

The observations and conclusions from our research fall broadly under three categories: the "first five years," the vocation of a theological school, and the necessary partnership between school and judicatory/congregation in pastoral formation.

The "first five years"

Much of the literature we reviewed focused on the initial years of pastoral ministry. The literature reflects a growing consensus, strengthened by this research, that the first five years of pastoral ministry are critical. The transition into pastoral ministry and the initial years in the parish are difficult. Seminaries, denominations, and the churches themselves need to give careful attention to both the transition itself, issues of placement and first steps, as well as the unique dynamics and challenges that come during this period.

Some denominations have actually created notable programs that focus on the challenges of these years. Noteworthy in this regard would be the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its program "First Call," which includes a "vicarage year" where close mentoring experiences occur. The United Methodists also have a mentoring program. The United Church of Christ (UCC) program, "First Five" (formerly known as the "First Call" project), unites seminaries, synods, and congregations in post-seminary training. Research in the Presbyterian Church (PC[USA]) has urged that MDiv programs give particular attention to "first call issues."

The UCC initiative arises out of recognition that without careful attention to the first five years, even the very best seminary curriculum is lost or "wasted." They thus conclude that post-seminary programs are critical complements to a good seminary education, enabling the cultivation of healthy relationships, sustainable ministries, and the capacity to learn within the context of congregational life. "Together in Ministry: First Five Report, May 2000," observes that the first five years of ministry is a time of transition, stress, and new learning. The study also concludes that the church needs to extend the education and the support for ministry personnel after formal theological education.[6]

The UCC study highlights the value of mentoring relationships (though this church body has not chosen to formalize this relationship through certification). To do so would be to create another "tier in the education system."[7] However, the ELCA's First Call program includes intentional mentoring relationships, collegial groups, and learning covenants that incorporate congregational involvement.

Dean Hoge engaged in research that examined the first five years of the priesthood within the Roman Catholic communion.[8] The conclusions highlighted that the main stressor for newly ordained priests is "overwork and over-responsibility,"[9] that new ordinands feel inadequately prepared for the administrative details of their parish responsibilities,[10] and that they want more training in prayer and spiritual formation.[11] The study concluded that a critical need in the early years is the matter of negotiating both the priesthood and the needs for love and intimacy.[12]

And what is noteworthy is that this study also stresses the need for mentoring relationships that include genuine accountability[13] and peer support groups[14]— each geared or focused on these first five years. Jackson Carroll thus emphasized that thriving in the first five years required a capacity to reflect on and learn from experience and that this was cultivated in part by mentors and pastoral peers (particularly through friendship).

We examined two surveys that ATS had carried out over the last five years on entering and graduating students.[15] We sought to discover whether analyses of data from that research offered any clues for our own research. We found some hints of issues to which we ought to give attention.

In the survey of entering students, it was noted, "approximately three-fifths of the respondents were enrolled in the MDiv Program,"[16] and thus were preparing for pastoral leadership. They came from congregations of varying sizes. "Nearly all of the entering seminarians in the MDiv program (96.3 percent in 2000–2001) rated themselves as either "very active" or "moderately active" in their worshiping community. About three-quarters of the group (73.1 percent) rated themselves "very active."[17] These data suggest that they come to seminary with experiences to share, and that we could find opportunities in the classroom and beyond to weave these experiences into their learning situations.

More instructive for our purpose was the *Graduating Student Questionnaire*.[18] It probed, among other concerns, satisfaction "with their preparation for ministry, their progress in skills."[19] This research confirmed what we learned from other studies that "graduates held in first place both their ability to use and interpret Scripture and their ability to think theologically."[20] They also claim "satisfaction in their ability to preach well, conduct worship or liturgy, relate social issues to faith, and to know their own religious tradition."[21] These are indicators of what we do well in theological education. Respondents also indicated that they did possess improved pastoral skills, had a better idea of their strengths and weaknesses, and were more self-confident. They also recognized field education as a positive experience. "The top rated effect of these experiences was improved pastoral skills."[22]

A general impression from both surveys is that "seminary education is achieving some of its most cherished goals."[23] Although, while there is an indication that graduates experienced growth in pastoral skills, there are no indicators of how these skills are conducive to effective pastoral ministry. Perhaps this survey needs to explore ways in which these data could be obtained.

It is interesting and perhaps a little sobering to compare the insights that arise from the literature on the first five years with the analysis of the tabulated results from the casebook, taped interview, and field observation forms that are part of the ATS-sponsored *Profiles of Ministry* program.[24] The results of these questions include capacities and dispositions that are crucial for effective congregational leadership. These data are based on scores tabulated for Stage I in the fall of 2002 and Stage II for graduating students in the same academic year (in the spring of 2003). One would naturally expect that the results of Stage II would indicate progress and positive development in the capacities and especially in the dispositions necessary for congregational leadership.

The tabulated results indicate there is a slight but statistically significant movement in the right direction for the category of Fidelity to Tasks and Persons. What is also clear is that there are almost uniformly high scores given to the Stage II seminarians on their field experiences. They reflect the judgments of pastors, field supervisors, and lay members on the practice of ministry by these interns. They are uniformly high when the measure is positive and low when it is negative. Both are excellent.

There are, however, areas of concern. The evidence points to minimal growth in the category of taking personal responsibility while also remaining flexible and open to new ideas. Also, while there is a propensity to acknowledge limitations, this could easily be read as an unwillingness to take responsibility for their leadership. A particular concern would be evidence in this research that there is a growing clericalism and a broad sense among graduating students from ATS accredited schools that their education provides them with qualifications to lead but not necessarily with the disposition to embrace the talents of the congregation.

What one naturally hopes to see is evidence that seminarians are cultivating not only the capacity to lead but also the capacity to build congregational community. While theological schools talk about the importance of "servant leadership" it is not clear from the data that this disposition is actually being cultivated in our curricula. When counseling sessions with persons in congregations are reported, it is clear that a majority of ATS graduates would be more inclined to provide theological solutions to personal dilemmas than to be nondirective listeners. While providing theologically sound responses for those they counsel is clearly important, one would hope that there would be high scores indicating a willingness to listen. Hopefully this would indicate further that the whole approach to congregational leadership would be one that arises from first having "listened" or "read" the congregation. While there is some evidence that this is happening, it is clearly a dimension of pastoral formation that could be strengthened.

Our conclusion from a review of this literature and our interviews is that graduate theological education should intentionally anticipate these first five years and cultivate the capacities that will enable their graduates to thrive in these critical years (i.e., the capacity to enter into a fruitful mentoring relationship, the capacity to know a congregation, the capacity to learn from the experience of ministry). As mentioned, a PC(USA) study group ("Draft Report on Entrance in Pastoral Ministry Work Group") made recommendations along similar lines and urged that each PC(USA) Master of Divinity program give attention to the following "first call issues": (a) self-understanding in relation to the role of the pastor; (b) ability to understand and associate themselves with a congregation's history, ethos, programs, status in the community, and relation to the denomination; (c) understanding of the dynamics of pastoral leadership in a particular congregation; and, (d) capacity for managing conflicts within the congregation.[25] We wonder from this report if it is not reasonable to conclude that the stated goals should actually be the focus of an MDiv theological education. A curriculum has a limited "shelf life." As such, much if not most of a theological curriculum could legitimately be geared toward the initial years of pastoral ministry.

It is also worth noting that attention does need to be given to placement; not all potential appointees fit equally well in all congregations. Jackson Carroll emphasizes that there is a higher level of synergy and participation when the pastor has a common theological and spiritual heritage with that of the congregation. George E. Crespin in his response to the Hoge research on the first five years of the priesthood addresses the importance within a Roman Catholic setting of a priest's first assignment as crucial to long-term future ministry.[26]

The vocation of a theological school faculty

Our second conclusion from this review of the literature and from our interviews relates to the vocation of the faculty of ATS theological schools. On the one hand, it is vital that we affirm what seminaries and related institutions are

doing well and that any adjustments or revisions to the curriculum need to build on and affirm these strengths. Here the recurring theme is that theological schools are effectively providing their students with an understanding of the faith tradition—Scripture, history, and theology.

But there is an equally strong insistence that faculty need to teach with a greater attention to the actual practice of ministry, educating toward the "reflective practitioner," where students develop habits of reflection, reading, and relating to others. We need to help our students learn ways to introduce change, how to engage others in constructive criticism, and how to bring together in conversation the resources of Scripture, tradition, *and* contextual reality. This need is particularly a challenge when an increasingly high percentage of faculty do not personally have experience in the practice of congregational leadership and ministry or themselves know how to be reflective practitioners. Further, it seems to be built into the inbred assumptions of theological schools that they only need to teach toward comprehension of the Scriptures and the faith tradition. David Roozen observes that seminaries continue to teach on the assumption that if you "think it" you can "do it."

The need to learn and experience practical aspects of ministry, of course, means that field education is crucial to minimize the gap between understanding and the actual capacity to do ministry. As Sr. Katarina Schuth puts it in her response to the Roman Catholic study on the first five years, "To correct the deficiency [inadequate preparation for church administration], they strongly recommended more practical, hands-on training and more realistic parish experiences during formation, including having a pastoral year away from the seminary".[27] An internship, with immersion in congregational life, is one of the most vital components of the seminary curriculum. Some are now requiring an entire year internship like the current Lutheran practice. Many others are urging that internships become the norm within their own church traditions. An internship program may be the only way the link between seminary and congregation can be sustained.

Further, it might well be that a theological school could choose to add particular courses that address particular aspects of the practice of ministry to complement and anticipate the field education component of the curriculum. For example, George E. Crespin, in his response to this research, argues that Roman Catholic schools need to include in the discussion of personal and spiritual development a more focused and engaging discussion of matters of sexuality and intimacy along with the cultivation of a life of prayer.[28] (The same argument is echoed in the response of Sr. Katarina Schuth.)

The research of Mark Chaves of the University of Arizona, in his "Four Key Findings from the National Congregations Study,"[29] further emphasizes the need for immersion in the core activities of congregations as part of the actual curriculum of a program of theological study. What is noted in this study is that most seminary graduates discover that their first parish responsibility is in a church very different from their own congregational experience, thus highlight-

ing a need for an internship within a congregation similar to what one might expect in one's first pastoral assignment.

Further, it is clear that the curriculum needs to address more fully the actual work that a pastor does. Chaves asks: "Do seminary curricula and programs accurately reflect this reality and adequately prepare students for the core activities of congregational life?" He asks this question recognizing that the core activities of congregations are worship and religious education, and, thus, it follows that a seminary curriculum merits orientation toward this fundamental or core set of activities. He also mentions finances and notes that, "Raising and managing money is a perennial concern for most congregations." It seems appropriate, therefore, for Chaves to ask "whether seminarians are adequately prepared to deal with congregational financial issues."[30]

This research suggests the deficiency is not corrected by merely adding a field education component—however crucial and absolutely necessary that is—or adding a course here or there to respond to inadequacies or gaps in the curriculum (such as a course on prayer). The resounding observation is that the whole of the curriculum must necessarily be geared toward the formation of the reflective practitioner. When the whole of the academic program is directed toward the practice of ministry, the curriculum is designed to cultivate the spiritual and practical capacities that enable a person to thrive in pastoral ministry. By this we do not mean that only the applied courses currently embedded in the curriculum are sufficient to accomplish preparation for the practice of ministry. Rather, the orientation toward the practice of ministry is integral to the vocation of the faculty and the curriculum as a whole—that faculty need to teach with a greater attention to personal and spiritual development as part of what it means to enable a person to be ready for the initial years of pastoral ministry.

But in identifying this need, we are immediately aware of a problem. As David Roozen noted in our interviews with him, as a rule, faculty have not been prepared through their own study programs to integrate matters of personal and spiritual formation into their lectures and classes. Some may actually view attention to these themes as a threat to critical theological reflection. He notes that intellectualism within seminaries undermines the vital need for affective development (which in the end, may be as crucial for long-term congregational leadership as intellectual formation). Thus, in identifying the crucial need, we also note the challenge that seminaries face in responding to this need.

Whereas the whole curriculum needs to be integrated toward the practice of ministry, there are notable capacities that could perhaps be incorporated into a study program or curriculum. A recurring theme in the research is that pastors need to have the capacity to "read" both the congregation and its community—the cultivation of a congregational hermeneutic that in turn becomes a critical reference for the introduction of change.[31] A common observation of graduates is that seminary curricula do not provide the skills to understand the very congregations from which they have come. Actually, some would even suggest that

seminaries actually discourage the competencies needed for knowing a congregation. These competencies are as much as anything capacities that arise from a reading of the affective contours of a community (a perspective not usually highlighted by a seminary curriculum and often not enthusiastically encouraged).

This kind of "read" requires both affective and relational skills. These skills address leadership concerns as well as the capacity of pastoral leaders to deal with situations of conflict in context and to inspire and empower others for ministry. These are the skills and competencies that "count" in congregational leadership, and they tend to be different from those that "count" within a seminary education. In a congregation, one learns from conversation and interaction within the community (a vital way of learning, or a competency, that is not often cultivated within a seminary).

A partnership between the theological school and the church (both judicatory and congregation)

What emerges from this literature and from the discussions we have had is that there is no getting around the fact theological education is at its best and pastoral formation most effective when there is an intentional partnership between the church—on both the judicatory level and as congregations—and the theological school. Theological schools, and especially the faculty, will only be able to accomplish their mission if they work closely with church agencies in the formulation of curriculum and in the actual process of pastoral formation. The seminary needs to accept its potential but also its limitations—and thus recognize the need for a close partnership with judicatories and congregations in the preparation for ministry.

Judicatories, which sometimes perceive the seminary as the problem, need to be equally willing to work with seminary faculty in what can only be experienced as a mutually enriching process. Nothing is gained by blaming the seminary for not doing what the seminary is not designed to do and cannot do in a three-year MDiv program. But seminaries cannot simply ignore what they view to be part of their limitations or outside of their sphere of competency; they necessarily need to work in close partnership with those who can contribute to the process of pastoral formation.

Because the congregation is the primary sphere of ministry and because the congregation is so different from the seminary—in terms of culture and ethos— the congregation needs to be the primary point of formation for congregational leadership. The seminary is only one "slice" of the formation process. This is doubly the case—if it was ever otherwise—now that seminaries themselves are no longer communities of formation in the sense they once were. For many schools, the majority of their students are commuters. It follows, then, that much if not most of their formatin already happens outside of the seminary context.

Proper pastoral formation will require an active intention on the part of both the church agency and the theological seminary. An example of this could be observed in the work that the PC(USA) has done. It has formed a working group to examine and make recommendations in connection with the process by which seminary graduates are transitioned into ministry. It has included strong affirmation of the vital role the Committees on Preparation for Ministry as having *primary* responsibility "in matters of formation and discernment of readiness for ministry," but the need is expressed for intimate partnership with seminaries in this process.[32]

The bottom line, though, is that the seminary is at its best when it works in collaboration with those who are the very practitioners of the work for which the seminary is doing its formation, i.e., pastors. The ideal is that both the student and theological school view both the professor and the pastor as playing equally critical roles in the formation of pastoral leadership.

Areas for further research

While it would appear that there is a strong consensus around these three questions—from the literature and conclusions arising from the research that has been done on the "first years"—questions have also been raised.

Do theological schools support ecclesial communities?

From these observations it is clear that a theological school can only be effective if it is a church-friendly place. However, David Roozen makes the observation that congregations are not the defining image for most seminary faculties. On the whole, he notes, the faculty of theological schools do not have a common or well-defined image of what it is that makes a congregation vital. This research could explore the following questions:

♦ What is the image of the congregation embedded in a seminary curriculum?
♦ What is the perception of congregational vitality, and what does this understanding mean for the curriculum?
♦ How does a faculty contribute to that image?
♦ What sensitivities do theological faculties bring to their teaching, what experiences, what images of the pastor do they have and convey in the classroom?
♦ Do faculty exhibit indifference and negative images, and do these get communicated to students?
♦ How do faculties use information about congregations to revise what they do in the classroom?

What this research will likely demonstrate is that internally, field education faculties do not tend to carry the same "weight" on the faculty as their colleagues in the traditional disciplines. It is consistently the case that they are not viewed to be peers on the faculty. In other words, within theological schools it would

appear to be the case that faculty who are most involved with students in the practice of ministry tend to be on the margins of the academy. Their work is not viewed as critical to the total formation process of students.

Further, Roozen suspects that this kind of research would demonstrate that as a rule seminary faculty do not accept the very phenomena of congregational *leadership* (partly due to a fear or loathing of power). Consequently, they do not enthusiastically teach in a manner that cultivates the capacity for meaningful leadership. This is certainly not universal to ATS seminaries, but it is a factor for some of them.

Is gender a significant factor in "the first five years"?

It is commonly observed that a higher percentage of women than men do not complete the first years. It would be helpful to know the reasons for this attrition. Are there notable extrinsic stress points for women in congregational life that add to the intrinsic tensions of the first five years? Conversely, is there something in the experience of women that enables them to bring particular capacities to the early years of ministry—something that should perhaps be highlighted and encouraged?

What significance is there between prior and concurrent pastoral ministry?

Most of the research to date has examined the early years of ministry in those situations where these initial years follow the completion of the MDiv. But students in many traditions come to seminary with considerable pastoral experience. And in some cases, they do their studies concurrent with ongoing pastoral ministry. Thus their experience would be different. They would have the cultural clash between the academy and the church after their studies, but would be moving back and forth between the two worlds while pursuing their theological education. What strengths and benefits are there for students who complete their theological education in this way? What opportunities are present in the seminary curriculum to benefit from exchanges among persons—students and teachers—in the classroom and in the learning community? Are such experiences intentionally encouraged and promoted?

Each of these questions could potentially inform the ongoing conversation on what it takes to effectively prepare a person for pastoral leadership within a congregation. The research we have reviewed leads us to think that the theological school should intentionally make the congregation a focus for theological education. This brings an obvious benefit for those anticipating congregational ministry, but even those on an academic track would benefit from a theological education that had a strong ecclesial orientation.

And the implications of this are that in the process of assessment and review of a theological curriculum, the congregation would be a primary source of information and input. Schools serve their students well when they teach in a manner that reflects an active engagement with ecclesial communities. This will

be reflected in whether the communities of faith are viewed and embraced as venues of learning and as integral to the theological formation of our students and whether the leadership of congregations—both ordained and lay—have the capacity to be particular in the formation of future pastors and, further, to inform the actual curriculum of the theological school. In other words, when it comes to the practice of assessment, it would seem that at least four questions (in connection with this research) should be part of the process for theological schools.

♦ Do we have good information from our recent graduates—an effective way of finding out how effective they are in the initial years of ministry and, in turn, a way to incorporate this information into our planning?

♦ Are we able to demonstrate that our graduates are cultivating the capacity to be reflective practitioners and that this is reflected in the affective and relational capacities necessary for "reading" a congregation?

♦ Is this theological school a church-friendly place, with a favorable orientation toward congregations and pastoral leadership, and do we have a way to monitor if we are church-friendly?

♦ Are we able to demonstrate that practitioners themselves are key participants and partners in the process of pastoral formation (which also includes the ability to demonstrate how practitioners influence the learning of the theological faculty as a whole)?

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ENDNOTES

1. The ATS staff provided us with a remarkable collection of literature: studies conducted within the last two to five years by denominations with ATS affiliate status. We also had opportunity to review the literature produced by the *The Pulpit and Pew Studies: Research of Pastoral Leadership* at Duke University and the Hartford Institute for Religious Research's report on religion in the United States, entitled *Faith Communities Today*, and interviews with their respective directors and staff members, along with ATS staff members whose research or observations were pertinent to this project.

2. *ATS Bulletin 46, Part I, 2004: Standards of Accreditation* (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools, 2004).

3. Interviews on December 5, 2003, with David Roozen.

4. Interview with Jackson Carroll on November 29, 2003.

5. We reviewed five reports, which were published between fall 2002 and winter 2003. We list these as, *Women's Path Into Ministry: Six Major Studies* by Edward C. Lehman, Jr.;

What Do Lay People Want in Pastors? Answers from Lay Search Committee Chairs and Regional Judicatory Leaders by Adair T. Lummis; *How Much Should We Pay The Pastor? A Fresh Look at Clergy Salaries in the 21ˢᵗ Century* by Becky McMillan and Matthew J. Price; *What is Good Ministry? Resources to Launch a Discussion: A Collection of Portraits and Essays about Good Ministry,* edited by Jackson W. Carroll and Carol E. Lynch; *Emergent Patterns of Congregational Life and Leadership in the Developing World: Personal Reflections from a Research Odyssey* by Donald E. Miller.

6.   *Together in Ministry: First Five Years Report* by Kay Heuer for The Education for Church Leadership Coordinating Committee, United Church of Christ, May 2000.

7.   Ibid., 7.

8.   Dean R. Hoge, *The First Five Years of the Priesthood: A Study of New Ordained Catholic Priests* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002).

9.   Ibid., 6.

10.   Ibid., 30 and 93.

11.   Ibid., 30 and 94.

12.   Ibid., 94.

13.   Ibid., 107.

14.   Ibid., 101.

15.   Francis A. Lonsway, *The Entering Student Questionnaire: A Study of Five Years of Use* (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools, 2001).

16.   Ibid., 2.

17.   Ibid., 4.

18.   Francis A. Lonsway, *The Graduating Student Questionnaire: A Study of Five Years of Use 1996–97 through 2000–01,* (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools, 2002).

19.   Ibid., 3.

20.   Ibid., 4.

21.   Ibid.

22.   Ibid., 12.

23.   Ibid., 13.

24.   ATS-sponsored *Profiles of Ministry* program (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools).

25.   *Draft Report on Entrance in Pastoral Ministry,* submitted to the National Ministries Division, the Congregational Ministries Division, and the Council on Theological Education, PC(USA), November 2000, 14.

26.   Hoge, *The First Five Years,* 107.

27.   Ibid., 142.

28.   Ibid., 96 and 106.

29.   Mark Chaves, "Four Key Findings from the National Congregational Study," Forum Presentation, Theological School Programs for Strengthening Congregational Leadership, University of Arizona, January 4, 2001.

30.   Ibid., 5.

31.   Interview with Jackson Carroll.

32.   *Draft Report on Entrance in Pastoral Ministry*, 7.

To Theologians:
From One Who Cares about Theology but is Not One of You

Nicholas Wolterstorff
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ABSTRACT: Nicholas Wolterstorff provides a distinctive appreciation of the challenges facing theological scholarship in this opening address to the Luce Consultation on Theological Scholarship held in May 2003 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He takes the measure of theological discourse as a specialization, acknowledging the importance of doing theology in dialogue with its intellectual counterparts in the academy or, as he frames it, in a "nonengaged" manner. By "nonengaged" he means theology without its particular mooring in specific communities of faith and action. He also makes a compelling case, however, for the equally essential role of "engaged" theology that is anchored to the church and unapologetic about its confessional commitments. Against polarized understandings of theology as either engaged or nonengaged, he proposes a constructive alternative, that is, consideration of what he terms "formation theology" to overcome the artificial and outmoded theory/praxis or speculative/practical theology fissure in theological scholarship.

I

Let me confess in public what hitherto I have confessed only in private: I intended to become a theologian. When I went to Harvard as a graduate student in philosophy, I intended, after getting my doctorate in philosophy, to study theology. That remained my intention when, three years later, I received the doctorate. So after spending a term at the University of Cambridge hanging out with philosophers, I went to Amsterdam to listen to the lectures of Gerrit Berkouwer at The Free University. Berkouwer, so I was told by those who seemed to know, was the preeminent living theologian in my own tradition, the Dutch Reformed tradition. I could not stand his lectures. The standards of rigor were so far below those I had absorbed by my induction into the analytic tradition of philosophy that I decided, after sticking it out for a couple of months, that if this was the best theologian in my tradition, I could not spend the rest of my life among theologians. I was not prepared to jump ship into some other tradition, assuming things were better somewhere else.

My reaction, I now think, was adolescent. Eventually I came to see that there were merits in Berkouwer's theology to which, at the time, I was completely oblivious. So the unworthy behavior I am now publicly confessing is not that of

having intended to become a theologian—that's no sin!—but of having been deterred by such an adolescent response.

In any case, that's why I have been a philosopher all these years—happily and gratefully so, let me add; I would not have had it otherwise—which implies, I realize, that I thank God for that bit of adolescent behavior whose unworthiness I have just now confessed. Nonetheless, those youthful stirrings have never disappeared. I have always read theology—not enough to "keep up" with developments in a systematic way, but, nonetheless, a good deal. And over the years, those youthful stirrings have gradually become stronger so that now, for the most part, I prefer discussing theological topics and topics on the border between theology and philosophy, to discussing purely philosophical ones. I am currently writing a book on justice in which I try to think of God's justice and our justice together, and in which I do my best to take account simultaneously of the philosophical literature, the theological literature, and the biblical studies literature. I anticipate that it will go largely unread: philosophers will find it too theological and biblical, theologians will find it too philosophical, biblical scholars will find it both too philosophical and too theological—and biblically naive besides.

II

Now that I have given you some of the relevant information about the person speaking to you, let me proceed to the topic at hand. Dan Aleshire asked that I set the context for your meeting here this weekend by reflecting on what has been good and necessary in recent theological scholarship, as I have observed it, and what, as he so delicately phrased it, has "been more whimsical than substantive." The appropriate tone, he said, would be personal, even autobiographical where appropriate. His knowledge of my track record led him to think that there was no danger of my becoming whimsical.

I have decided that rather than composing a catalog of the good and the bad, the serious and the whimsical, I would spend most of my allotted time asking why theology has assumed the forms it has assumed, and what are the prospects of things changing. Most catalogs, to my mind, are boring; and in any case, probably every one of you here has more of the knowledge necessary for composing a catalog of the good and the bad, the serious and the whimsical, than I do.

Theology, understood for the moment as theory consisting of claims about God, sometimes arises within the contemporary academy in the course of attempts by cosmologists, and to a lesser extent philosophers, to explain certain things about the world or human beings. The existence of God functions as a theoretical postulate. The entity postulated is, of course, very odd, even bizarre; but then, contemporary physics and cosmology are filled with odd and bizarre theoretical entities. God is just one of the crowd. As you all know, the postulation of God as the best, or only, explanation of certain features of cosmos or humankind has a long ancestry, going back at least to Aristotle.

My own judgment is that if the only impetus to the practice of theology were the attempt of cosmologists and philosophers to offer theoretical explanations of certain features of cosmos or humankind, then theology would play a very minor role in the contemporary world. It would attract the attention of those who have a taste for funny entities and final explanations, but that would be about it.

The main impetus for the emergence and perpetuation of theology has always been its perceived importance for religious communities, particularly *Christian* communities. Judaism and Islam—to speak now only of the Abrahamic religions—have had and do have their theological moments. But text-interpretation occupies a much higher proportion of their intellectual endeavors, and theology a much lower proportion, than is and has been true for Christianity. It should not go without notice that there are whole branches of Christianity that want nothing to do with theology, however.

Theology as a theoretical discipline, a *Wissenschaft*, has occupied and continues to occupy two distinct roles in the Christian community—overlapping, but nonetheless distinct. For one thing, many branches of Christianity (not all) have perceived theology as necessary for the well-functioning of the ordinary religious life of the Christian community. The community needs an educated leadership—an "educated clergy," to use the old familiar phrase, and theology has been seen as an important component of that education. But second, theology has also functioned as the ideological component of the life of the community. I don't like using the word "ideology" here; it has too many misleading connotations. But I don't know of a better word. The idea is this: the practice of the Christian life requires believing and taking for granted a large number of things about God and God's relation to what is other than God; in theology one elaborates these convictions, asks how they are related to each other, asks how they are related to other convictions that we have, and so forth.

These two roles of theology—call them the *engaged* and the *nonengaged*—often prove to be in tension with each other. Those concerned with the everyday religious life of the community find that the nonengaged theologians of the community are not developing the reflections that the community needs for its life; the needs of the community do not set the agenda, something else does. And the nonengaged theologians look down on the engaged theologians as merely applying in practice what they, the nonengaged theologians, think out; *practical* theology, they call it. Or they look down on the engaged theologians as defenders of the status quo, giving the church what it wants when they ought to be launching critiques against the church—for the church's own good, of course. As for myself, I think it is important for the health both of Christian theology and the church that the tension between these two roles of theology, the engaged and the nonengaged, be maintained. There is a similar tension in legal theory between the engaged and the nonengaged; I have friends among professors of law who think it is important for the health of legal theory and the law that the tension be maintained.

To Theologians:
From One Who Cares about Theology but is Not One of You

Now suppose I am right in my claim that the main impetus behind the emergence and continuation of theology is not the desire of a few cosmologists and philosophers to explain certain features of cosmos and humankind, but the need of religious communities, particularly certain Christian communities, for engaged theology, and the perception by those same religious communities of the worth of nonengaged theology; then the fate of theology in the modern Western world—to speak only of it—is intimately tied up with the fate of religion in the modern Western world and of influential attitudes toward religion. That is my first main point. The form theology has taken among us is in great measure a consequence of the form religion has taken among us—and even more, I would say, a consequence of the form that *attitudes* toward religion on the part of the cultural elite have taken among us. Let me develop this point.

III

I would say that there are four dominant themes in how the cultural elite of the modern West has thought of religion; the themes are not entirely consistent with each other.

The cultural elite has thought that as modernization advances, religion will wither away. Modernization both produces and is produced by greater wealth and scientific advance. Religion, by contrast, feeds on poverty and ignorance. Hence, as we become better off and better minded, religion will wither on the vine.

Second, the cultural elite has thought that religion is irrelevant for explaining anything; it's purely epiphenomenal. Other things explain religion but religion doesn't explain anything. Some years back a large book on civil society appeared in which it was argued that the anti-communist revolution in Eastern Europe and the anti-apartheid revolution in South Africa must be understood in terms of dynamics in civil society. So what about the role of religious leaders in both cases? Purely epiphenomenal. Men who just happened to be ministers and archbishops met in buildings that just happened to be churches and spoke language that just happened to be religious to people who just happened to be familiar with such language. The real motivations were all for power and wealth.

Third, the cultural elite has thought that religion, given that it comes in a plurality of exclusivist particular forms, and given that in almost all those forms it tells stories of conflict, is inherently coercive; Derrida, given his proclivity for hyperbole, says that religion is inherently *violent.* Of course, if religion has no causal efficacy, it's hard to see how it could be coercive; but let that pass. There is a deep and wide strand of thought in the modern world which holds that religion must in one way or another "shape up" if it is not to threaten social peace with its inherent coerciveness: Rorty says that religion must shape up by confining itself to the private; Rawls, that it must shape up by using shared public reason for debating political issues; Hick, that it must shape up by getting rid of all exclusivism; Derrida, that it must shape up by getting rid of all messianic

content and keeping the bare structure of messianism; Kant, that it must shape up by becoming a religion of reason alone.

And last, the cultural elite has thought that religious belief lacks intellectual plausibility, that it is not rational, for the reason that it is not rationally grounded in the deliverances of consciousness, perception, and reason. Though perhaps some of it *could be* rationally grounded, much of it could not be. And as it comes, none of it is.

Religion is withering away; religion is causally inert; religion is coercive; religious belief is irrational: those have been dominant themes in how the cultural elite of the modern West has thought about religion. And if that is how a person thinks of religion, then, given what I have suggested to be the ties between religion and theology, one will think of theology as an outmoded, rationally ungrounded, coercive relic.

It is my impression that a fair amount of what is not so good, and even whimsical, in theology is the completely predictable response by theologians to this indictment by our cultural elite. The theologian looks around for developments in the contemporary academy that seem to be generally esteemed, and tries to sail a bit of theology under those colors. If Rawls is esteemed, then one does political theology within a Rawlsian framework; if Ricoeur is esteemed, then one does biblical hermeneutics within a Ricoeurean framework; if Derrida is esteemed, then one thinks about grace within the Derridean framework of "the gift"; and so forth. Or one does conjunctive theology: theology and physics, theology and feminism, theology and art, and the like. Or one sets up what is called a "dialogue" between theology, on the one hand, and one or another esteemed development on the other. Or one spends the great bulk of one's time on methodology and typology. In short, when I as a philosopher look at theology, what I see is an ebb and flow of political correctness—*ebb and flow,* since the correct, the fashionable, the currently esteemed, is constantly changing.

One can also look at these same developments from just a slightly different angle: they are responses to the longing to be relevant. There remains in the theologian the longing—admirable in my view—to speak to the world, indeed, to heal the world; in my fellow philosophers there is next to nothing of such a longing. So the theologian looks to see what language the world is currently speaking, and tries to speak in that language. Ironically, I think the result of most such attempts to be relevant is irrelevance—irrelevance to academy and church alike. Hardly anybody pays attention.

That's one response to the indictment of religion, and thus of theology, by the cultural elite. There is an opposite response, equally predictable. Because the world is "going to hell in a handbasket," it is best to ignore it, construct one's own little theological ghetto, read a few safe old texts from one's own tradition with one's students, and when they give the appearance of having been well indoctrinated, send them forth to propound what they have been told while railing against liberalism, postmodernism, or whatever happens to be the current demon.

To Theologians:
From One Who Cares about Theology but is Not One of You

I hope you discern that though I mean to pass judgment on these two reactions, I do not want to do so in judgmental fashion. I could wish there had been more courage, more thinking against the grain, more setting of one's own agenda, more mining of theology's own rich resources; nonetheless, I feel empathy for the plight of theologians and understand why they have so often gone for either the adaptive or the protective mode. I well realize that my own calling as a Christian philosopher has been significantly easier.

Rather than developing further this theme of judgment and lament by citing instances—I doubt that it would be productive to do so—I want to go on to say that there are signs that you and I are living through the breakup of that complex of attitudes toward religion that I described—not the breakup of the conviction that religion is dangerous (that conviction strikes me as becoming stronger as the consequence of recent events) but the breakup of the convictions that religion will wither away under conditions of modernization, and that religion is causally inert. And as Reformed epistemology and its affiliates slowly make their way into the consciousness of the elite, there is the breakup of the conviction that religious belief is irrational because it is not rationally grounded in the deliverances of perception, consciousness, and reason.

I am sure that most if not all of you can cite signs of the breakup. Let me mention just two from among many that have come to my attention. One sign was a conference I participated in last fall at the University of Wisconsin on the place of theology in the global situation, sponsored not by theologians but by historians and professors of law at Wisconsin. Nobody at the conference believed that religion was a causally inert epiphenomenon, and nobody believed that it was withering away; everybody was convinced that if we are to understand what is going on across our globe, we must pay attention to theology. Another sign of the breakup was a fascinating two-page article in *The Atlantic Monthly* of March 2003 by David Brooks, titled "Kicking the Secularist Habit," in which Brooks describes himself as "a recovering secularist." He says that until 9/11 he "accepted the notion that as the world becomes richer and better educated, it becomes less religious"; now he believes that "secularism is not the future; it is yesterday's incorrect vision of the future." And he then goes on to describe six steps in what he calls "the recovery process" from secularism, concluding with these words: "We are inescapably caught in a world of conflicting visions of historical destiny. This is not the same as saying that we are caught in a world of conflicting religions. But understanding this world means beating the secularist prejudices out of our minds every day." You must read the whole article for yourself.

You see, I am sure, where these comments are leading. The changes that we are beginning to see in the attitude of the Western cultural elite toward religion will require corresponding changes in their attitude toward theology. I do not expect those changes to come rapidly. But I do expect that theology will come to be seen not as the sorry relic of an earlier day from which one's gaze is best averted but as something one cannot ignore if one wishes to understand this world of

swarming religiosity in which we live—and beyond that, something of intrinsic interest and importance. Theology is that discipline in which the deepest longings and highest hopes of the great majority of human beings find their most articulate expression. Perhaps the acknowledgment will even spread abroad that whether one likes theology or abhors it, one cannot dismiss it as simply irrational; Rorty, to his great credit, has said that it is sheer poppycock for the secularist to insist that what separates his thought from that of the theologian and the religious philosopher is that his is rational and theirs is not.

Now suppose this proves to be the case. It will not be adaptive theology that proves to illuminate our social world, but theology that sets its own agenda, speaks with its own voice, lives out of its own communities and traditions, has the courage of its own convictions. In the case of Christian theology, it will be theology which is forthrightly the theology of the triune God who is our creator and sustainer, our redeemer, and our consummator. What will prove illuminating is the work of the theologian who sees it as her task to articulate those convictions and to describe how life and cosmos look when seen in their light. She will indeed engage how others think of God and engage how others see the world; ghettoized theology is as much a failure of nerve and responsibility as is adaptive theology. But her engagement will include argument and polemic; she will not merely engage others so as to conform her theology to their way of thinking.

Everything within these old Calvinist bones of mine warns me away from triumphalism. But I do think we are on the cusp of a new era in how theology is perceived by the cultural elite, and beyond; and that your challenge as theologians in this new situation is to step forward with humble boldness, intellectual imagination, and spiritual seriousness, drawing from the wells of Scripture and the deep resources of two millennia of Christian theology. Let theology be theology.

IV

Let me now turn my attention in a somewhat different direction. Earlier I distinguished between two types of theology that emerge from and are sustained by the Christian church; *engaged* theology and *nonengaged* theology I called them. I don't much like the terminology; but I have not been able to think of anything better. And in any case, what is important for my purposes is not the terms but what the terms name. I mentioned that these two types of theology are typically in tension with each other: the engaged theologian thinks the other pays too little attention to the needs of the church, follows out too much the devices of his own head and the desires of his own heart; the nonengaged theologian thinks the other is too compliant, and in any case, is merely engaged in the humdrum work of applying what he, the nonengaged theologian, thinks out.

I want to say something shortly about the pecking order that this last comment implies. But before I get to that, I want to call attention to the fact that there are

features of the modern academy which pressure both engaged and nonengaged theologians toward theologizing in such a way that what they produce proves almost useless to the church, and worse, alien. We are touching here on why highly educated people drift away from mainline churches into megachurches and fundamentalist churches.

Many of you will be familiar with the concept of a *social practice* that Alasdair MacIntyre outlines in *After Virtue.* I think of academic learning, *Wissenschaft,* as such a social practice—or better, I suppose, a whole collection of social practices, theology among them. Like all social practices, learning is a practice that slowly alters over the years in response to both internal and external developments. The alterations represent the emergence of different goals, different techniques, different standards of excellence; and they are typically the subject of controversy.

Wissenschaft, thus conceived, has no essence; it makes no sense to ask what is *the nature* of science, of academic learning, of *Wissenschaft.* The alternative way of thinking of *Wissenschaft* is that which sees it as an activity with a nature, an essence, that slowly gets revealed over the course of history. It is my impression that a good many theologians, in the past anyway, have thought along the lines of the latter understanding; typically they have begun their systems of theology with the question, "Is theology a science?"

Wissenschaft as a social practice needs an institutional base. That institutional base need not be anything like our modern university; it can be a monastery on Mount Athos, to mention just one alternative. But it does need an institutional base. And the institution in which it finds a base will unavoidably make judgments about acceptable and unacceptable learning, better and worse. Now in principle the academies of the modern world might have been all over the map on this matter: this one here might have prized one version of the practice; that one there, a very different version; that third one over there, yet a different version; and so forth. To some extent this has in fact been true, especially here in the United States. But as I see it, there has been a powerful paradigm at work. And especially two features of that paradigm have been influential. Learning, in its paradigmatic form, is generically human learning. We are to set our particularities of conviction and commitment off to the side and practice learning as generic human beings—not as Christian human beings, or female, white, middle class, or any other such particularity, but just as human beings. And second, paradigmatic learning is rationally grounded by deduction, induction, and abduction, in the deliverances of perception, consciousness, and reason.

Theologians have felt the pressure to conform to this paradigm as much as anybody—perhaps, indeed, more than anybody. The prestige of natural science in the modern world has been such that if it were to be shown that some admirable piece of natural science did not fit the paradigm, that would cast doubt on the paradigm rather than the natural science. No such slack has been cut for the theologian.

What the church has asked of her nonengaged theologians is that they articulate in a theoretical manner her core conviction that the triune God is our creator and sustainer, our redeemer, and our consummator; what it has asked of her engaged theologians is that they adopt as their agenda the training of an educated leadership for the church. These are in both instances *particularistic* requests, not generically human requests. To practice theology in accord with that conviction and in service to that agenda is perforce not to fit the paradigm of a generically human *Wissenschaft.* I think it is because theologians and biblical scholars have felt the need to conform to the paradigm of the modern academy that the scholarship they have produced has so often seemed to members of the church so alien to their needs and convictions. Who needs more theological methodology? Who needs more biblical scholarship that doesn't tell me what I am to do with the Bible in my hand? In my experience, this alienation is usually not because theologians and biblical scholars are so hard of heart or weak of faith. It is because they live and work in a guild that says that their work must be impartial and free of all particularistic conviction—generic scholarship, rationally grounded.

I tell you nothing new when I say that this paradigm of academic learning, endorsed by the modern academy, has come under severe attack over the past quarter century or so and is showing signs of breaking up; to mention just one symptom, the academy is now chock full of particularistic learning of many sorts. Often there is an attempt to confine avowedly particularistic learning to pockets within the university: institutes, centers, programs, and so forth. But there it is nonetheless. However, while making room for feminist voices, African-American voices, gay voices, Jewish voices, and so forth, the academy remains chary of making room for an explicitly Christian voice, unless it be within some confined program of Christian studies. But as the conviction spreads that—with the exception perhaps of mathematics and the natural sciences—all learning is ideologically and particularistically shaped, I expect that too to change. When it does, there will be room for a theology within the academy that has not alienated itself from the church so as to conform to the academy's paradigm. Or am I once again being too sanguine?

One more thing here: the academy of the modern world disclaims wisdom as its ultimate goal. And it is shy of any explicit acknowledgment of excellence—shy of exclaiming that the poem being studied is beautiful, shy of exclaiming that the way the body works at this point is astounding, shy of acknowledging the worth of the person behind the text. Thus our theologians do not follow Maimonides's practice of never using the word "God" without immediately adding, "may his name be praised." Is the academy's disclaimer of wisdom and its chariness of acknowledging worth also diminishing? I do not know. What I do know is that theology does not flourish when those are missing.

V

One of my themes has been that recent developments hold out the promise—I do not claim more than promise—that theology can set its own agenda, mine its own rich resources, be faithful to the deep convictions of the church while nonetheless being critical of how those convictions get manifested, all without marginalizing itself within the academy. It will no longer feel that it has to sail under the colors of someone else's agenda.

I want now to seize this occasion so as to get something off my chest about what I have been calling *engaged* theology—that is, theology that sets its agenda by reference to the need of the church for educated leadership. Over my thirteen years of teaching in a divinity school, I become increasingly disturbed about the chaotic character of the offerings in what we call *Area IV* and about the second-class status of all those who work in what is called *practical* theology—a term I have studiously avoided in favor of the term "engaged" theology.

This latter point, the second-class status of those who work in so-called practical theology, is but the manifestation of a pattern that runs deep and wide in the academy generally. I have taught at two wonderful academic institutions: Calvin College and Yale University. At both of them—and they are typical on this point, not eccentric—there is a distinct pecking order within the faculty: those who use their hands, to speak metaphorically, are judged and treated as inferior to those who use only their heads. Performance musicians are inferior to musicologists, painters inferior to art historians, teachers of business inferior to economists, teachers of education inferior to philosophers—and teachers of preaching, liturgy, pastoral counseling, congregational life, and the like, inferior to systematic theologians and biblical scholars. The former enterprises in this last example are all collected together under the rubric, *practical theology*, the idea being that theory, which is the really important and difficult thing, is here applied.

Is there any way to overcome this attitude, or must we just learn to cope? Let me make a suggestion which, if it were adopted, would go a long way toward undoing both the chaotic character of engaged, or practical theology, and its second-class status. I made the suggestion some years back at my own present institution, Yale Divinity School; it had no noticeable effect beyond the dull thud it made when it hit the floor. Perhaps it harbors fatal flaws which my colleagues were so kind as not to point out to me. But let me try again. The person without failed causes to his or her credit has been too mousy.

Some years back I happened to pick up and read Jean LeClerq's, *The Love of God and the Desire for Learning.* The book is about the monastic tradition of medieval theology, represented, for LeClerq, especially by Bernard; along the way, LeClerq contrasts the monastic tradition of theology with the school tradition. It was for me an eyeopener. Almost all the medieval theology I had studied was classified as school theology; about LeClerq's monastic theology, I knew nothing. I knew that Anselm had been a monk and not a university professor; but for me, the move

from Anselm's *Proslogion* to Aquinas's *Summae* was seamless. Monastic theology, as LeClerq understood it, was concerned, in its overall orientation, with the formation of the monastic community. Whatever may have been the *telos* of school theology, it was not community formation. It was a few days later, while reflecting on LeClerq's wonderful book, that it occurred to me that what LeClerq had presented as a development in the medieval monasteries was really just one manifestation of a whole tradition of theology alternative to the tradition of school theology—call this alternative, the tradition of *formation* theology. Around this same time I had been reading Gutierrez's liberation theology; now what suddenly came into sharp focus was Gutierrez's own statement that he intended his theology to be of help to his own Christian community in Lima, Peru, in its attempt to gain a theological understanding of its economic and political plight and of what to do about it. This was formation theology, not school theology. Likewise the liberation theology of Allan Boesak; the black South African preacher and leader, was formation theology, not school theology. And shortly the thought occurred to me that John Calvin's theology, though now regarded as the property of our systematic theologians, was not seen by him that way but as a theology of service to the young reformation movement in the turbulent cities in which the movement found itself. I remember once, when I was working on the systematic theological topic of God's simplicity, looking up the topic in Calvin, discovering that he said nothing on the matter, and finding that strange. For the medieval school theologians, simplicity was the linchpin of their construction of God's ontological attributes; why would Calvin say nothing at all on the topic? I now concluded that the reason he said nothing on the matter was that he did not regard divine simplicity as a topic of burning importance for the life of the church in that boisterous refugee city which was Geneva. And now that we are going back in history, let's jump back to the Church Fathers; in good measure their theology was also formation theology.

So here is my idea: why not, in addition to the syllabus of systematic theology, standardly structured in terms of the loci of theology, anthropology, ecclesiology, and so forth, construct a counterpart syllabus of formation theology, with readings and topics extending from the Church Fathers through the medieval monks and the Reformers on up to our contemporary liberation theologians—to mention only a few highpoints? And why not set the teaching of preaching, of liturgy, of pastoral counseling, of church administration, and the like, within that context? The monastic community to which Bernard was trying to give form was very different from an inner-city church in contemporary America. One cannot just transplant Bernard into downtown Chicago one has to make allowances. But I wager that once one has made the allowances, there is much to learn, from him and all the others.

I realize that changing a curriculum is as difficult as moving a cemetery, and not all that different, so I don't really expect to hear that this suggestion has somewhere been implemented. But I think it would be fun to see where it might

go; I wish I were younger. I think an important part of forming the Christian community is forming it to be sensitive to the call for justice; it would be fascinating to mine the tradition of formation theology to see what we can learn about forming our communities to be seekers of justice, and then to go on to think about it for ourselves. I think an important part of forming the Christian community is forming it to think theologically about the music and the architecture of the church; indeed, there is probably no more important aspect of formation today than this. It would be fascinating to mine the tradition of formation theology to see what we can learn about getting our communities to think theologically about their music and architecture, and then to go on and think about the issues for ourselves. So too, it would be fascinating to mine the tradition of formation theology to see what we can learn about cultivating the Christian virtues, the "fruits of the Spirit," in all the members of our congregations, so that pastoral theology is not focused narrowly on those with "problems" but on building up all of us together. And so forth, you can run with the idea from here.

I see this proposal as having a number of distinct advantages over the present arrangement. First, it would overcome the current fragmentation of the so-called practical disciplines by giving them a unifying framework. Second, it would provide them with a long and rich body of literature, thus combatting the shallowness and presentism so typical of them. And third, it would have a fair chance of overcoming the second-class status of these disciplines. Formation theology would be a mode of theology distinct from, though overlapping with, school theology, a tradition with its own canonical texts, its own rich tradition, its own integrity, its own orientation. Nothing about it would invite the thought that it is merely the application of the really important stuff being done by the school theologians.

VI

One final concluding point. I have attended sessions at the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and I have participated in sessions. I don't like them. The main reason I don't like them was abundantly illustrated in a session a few years back on Oliver O'Donovan's book, *The Desire of the Nations.* O'Donovan was given twenty-five minutes to set forth the main themes of his difficult, provocative book. William Schweiker and I were each given ten minutes to respond, there were five minutes for questions from the floor, and then the people for the next session were banging on the door. I, as a philosopher, read this as not taking theological discussion seriously. Let me add that there was nothing invidious; almost all the sessions were fifty minutes or less. A comparable discussion of a book at the American Philosophical Association would have been allotted two and a half hours; it was because I was familiar with the habits of my own guild, the APA, that I read this AAR session as nonserious. Of course it's not men from Mars who organize the conventions of the AAR; it is the members of the AAR who organize them.

I see what I interpret as the same lack of seriousness in our theology grad students at Yale. Each year in the fall semester we have a graduate theology seminar which all the first- and second-year students are required to attend, which all the others are strongly urged to attend, and which is attended by the theology faculty. It's a constant battle to get the students to do anything more than write brief half-potted book reviews when they have to lead the session; they seem to have acquired the mentality of the guild even before they have entered it. They don't want to grapple with the issues; they seem afraid of vigorously disagreeing with each other. I concede that philosophers are an unusually argumentative, adversarial, group. But theologians seem so incredibly *nice* to each other—or more to the point, so incredibly nice to what each says to the other—that they never engage in serious sustained debate. Is that because theology lies so close to the heart, making it difficult to separate argument from person? I don't know. But I fail to see how theology can advance if there is no communal grappling with the issues, if there are no long sustained arguments, if nobody ever sticks out his neck, if together we don't think hard, really hard, and long, really long, about the issues—not just for fifty minutes, not just for a whole seminar session, not just for a whole seminar, but for a whole lifetime.

VII

I must close. I have thought it best to avoid citing examples of the good and the necessary versus the bad and the whimsical, though even so I have no doubt stepped on toes and ruffled feathers; you may want to get down to examples in your discussion sessions. I have judged that what I could best do is offer you, for your consideration, a framework for understanding why theology has taken the form it has, and for thinking about where it should be going and where it might well be going. To what extent I have or have not fulfilled Dan Aleshire's assignment is thus a good question.

In an essay that I wrote for an anthology in honor of Jurgen Moltmann I spoke of what I called "The Travail of Theology in the Modern Academy." I think it has indeed been a travail, and that that accounts for a good many of the features of recent theology that I regard as undesirable. I have tried, here today, to bring to light the roots of the travail. What I have also suggested, however is that the travail, though by no means over, may slowly be diminishing. I think there is reason for believing that theology has a bright future—theology which sets its own agenda while engaging what goes on around it, theology which honors its own long and rich tradition while not ignoring that of others, theology which is faithful to the needs and convictions of the church which gave it birth and continues to want and need it, theology which also critiques the church when and where it needs it.

To my young grad students who aim to become theologians I say, with all the emphasis I can muster: *be theologians.* Do not be ersatz philosophers, do not be ersatz cultural theorists, do not be ersatz anything. Be genuine theologians. Be

sure-footed in philosophy, sure-footed in cultural theory, and the like. And struggle to find a voice that can be heard, if not agreed with, not just by theologians but others as well. But then: be theologians. There will be cultural theorists around to tell us how things look from their perspective; there will be sociologists around to tell us how things look from their perspective. What we need to hear from you is how things look when seen in the light of the triune God—may his name be praised!—who creates and sustains us, who redeems us, and who will bring this frail and fallen, though yet glorious, humanity and cosmos to consummation.

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ATS Luce Consultation
on Theological Scholarship, May 2003

ABSTRACT: In May 2003, ATS convened more than one hundred members from its member schools for a three-day consultation to examine the scholarly work that has been undertaken in the theological disciplines and to think together about what it has accomplished and what kinds of scholarship need to be undertaken in the future. This article is a summary of that conversation.

INTRODUCTION

Consultation structure and participants

More than one hundred faculty members of ATS member institutions attended the first ATS Luce Consultation on Theological Scholarship, which was held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in May 2003, in order to discuss the current state and future needs of theological scholarship in theological education. Each faculty consultant participated in a facilitated conversation, first, on theological scholarship and the academy, followed by a conversation on theological scholarship and communities of faith, and concluding with a conversation on theological scholarship and theological education. For each of the three major conversations, consultants worked in groups of ten, with a convener for the group and an ATS staff member taking extensive notes. Individuals were grouped with different colleagues for each of the three conversations.

The consultants were selected from a pool of ATS faculty members nominated by their chief academic officers. A planning committee comprising former Luce fellows Jean Porter, Walter Brueggemann, Stanley Grenz, and Carl Holladay, as well as ATS staff, selected the consultants and planned the event. Consultants were chosen to represent the range of ATS institutions, scholarly disciplines, and faith communities.

Summarizing the conversation

The structure for the consultation resulted in a total of thirty small group discussions that generated more than one hundred pages of typed notes. The notes were analyzed for unique discussion topics, resulting in the identification of 843 topics. Each of these topic statements was then coded and, as appropriate, grouped with other statements forming a theme. This summary was written on the basis of these themes as they emerged from the record of consultation's discussion. It is difficult to summarize conversations that occurred in more than thirty differently constituted groups—all including talented theological faculty who care deeply about their work and have contributed immensely to theological

education and theological scholarship. A summary can be too general to be truly accurate or too detailed to be useful for further conversation. This summary has sought to chart a middle way between the two extremes. It describes the range of perceptions and reflects more the narrative of the conversation than an externally imposed logical outline.

The purpose of the consultation was to assess theological scholarship, but the conversation ranged widely. It focused on scholarship but also explored issues relative to curriculum, students, the mission and purpose of theological education, and the relationships of theological schools to ecclesial communities. This summary is produced and distributed to invite an even wider conversation among constituencies of the Association in preparation for the second Luce Consultation on Theological Scholarship, which will take place in fall 2005.

SUMMARY

I. Theological scholarship and the academy

To assess the current state and future needs of theological scholarship in relation to the academy, consultants worked in one of four types of groups: biblical studies, historical and theological studies, ethics and moral theology, and pastoral theology/pastoral arts.

Consultants were asked to focus their conversations around major themes of scholarly work in their disciplinary areas and to consider how this work has advanced theological scholarship and supported communities of faith. They were also asked to identify areas in need of scholarly attention. While each discipline has its own specificities, conversations identified several areas of common concern. These areas include the multiple perspectives, global context, and myriad cultural locations in which theological scholarship is currently done and will be done in the future; the need to integrate pastoral formation with student learning in each discipline; and the desire to enable faculty scholarship to better attend to the expressed and latent needs of the faith communities that theological schools and their graduates in ministry serve. The consultants noted that students arrive less well-prepared either in liberal arts studies or in the richness of their own theological and denominational traditions, although they often come with profound religious experiences. The consultants were also concerned with the plethora of publications in each discipline, whether enough of the most helpful kinds of popular-but-learned books were being written and whether institutional practices of tenure, promotion, and publication valued this kind of writing. They were concerned that theological scholarship's distinctive methodologies be respected within the academy, and that it not simply derive its methods or sensibilities from other academic disciplines, including religious studies. The consultants also noted that teaching and writing should be mindful of the concerns and communicative styles of each of theological scholarship's constituencies.

A. Biblical studies

Biblical studies faculty were particularly concerned to enable students to overcome their increasingly prevalent lack of liberal arts preparation and/or theological and ecclesial formation, and to prepare them to address the perceived rise in biblical illiteracy in the wider culture. They encourage their students to approach the Bible theologically, to teach congregations to do so as well, and to learn how to speak intelligently within both intra-faith and interfaith dialogues. These faculty also seek to help students counter church resistance to scholarly efforts and the sense that, as one faculty member put it, "people want chaplains, not critical thinkers."

Focusing scholarship on the needs of the church, they said, may involve increasing opportunities for conversations between theologians and the churches or between theologians and pastors, creative restructuring of the guilds and tenure processes, and the like. It might also involve helping churches become more receptive to the fruits of biblical studies, particularly on scholarly research topics in which church members already have an interest. The consultants felt that it was the churches' task to take the biblical texts seriously, to identify their contexts, and to continually reinterpret them. They felt it was biblical studies' particular task to assess how personal faith and communal commitments, as well as institutional ecclesial ties and limitations, detract from or enhance the discipline's effectiveness with this task.

Biblical studies faculty noted that this task should also shape how they teach and research historical issues concerning the New Testament (particularly Paul) and Jewish law, Christianity's relationship with Judaism, Paul and Apocalypse, modernity and Christianity, Christianity and Islam, and the theological value of the New Testament and its normative implications and patterns of thought.

The multiple perspectives and methodologies in biblical studies at present include the historical-critical method, Gadamerian hermeneutics and other literary methodologies, feminist interpretations, cultural liberationist interpretations, and multicultural readings, not to mention other methods and nuanced variations within each. Faculty were concerned about the "europeanizing" of the discipline and were interested in partnerships particularly with homiletics, ethics, and social sciences such as developmental psychology. They recognized that the technical and linguistic requirements of this discipline could often be barriers to those outside it but that collegiality as well as institutional and funder support for cross-disciplinary work could minimize such difficulties.

B. Systematic theology and church history

Faculty in systematic theology, historical theology, and church history found that there is little agreement on how theology itself should be conducted at present. There is much concern to attend to each distinctive individual, institutional, and denominational voice, to attend carefully to traditional texts, and to diminish divisions between systematic, constructive, and historical theologies. The consultants were especially concerned to distinguish what churches may

actually need from what they say they need, placing a priority on imagination and assessing whether something helps and why. Mindful of a need to be faithful to each tradition's strengths while addressing audiences ranging from church to academy and the wider public, they asked whether their task was to tell multiple stories or to tell a single story in which each voice has a clear place and part. They recommended that research be modeled and assessed less restrictively and be as responsive as possible to their students' concerns and questions.

Theological and historical research and teaching agendas change, the consultants found, depending on whether a seminary is university-related, denominationally related, or non-denominational. Dogmatic theology, for example, tends to be taught differently in each setting. They asked whether such subjects as Christology should be taught primarily as doctrine or through historical inquiry. They also raised concern about denominational identity and boundaries and whether traditions should be encouraged to re-define themselves through others.

The consultants noted that prior to 1968, there was more publishing by theological faculty than by those in religious studies departments. They hypothesized that the change came from both a decline in denominational membership and the increasingly specialized, sometimes esoteric nature of theological writing. Evangelicals worried that not enough constructive research on doctrine was being done in their institutions. The faculty were also concerned that certain denominations actively discourage theological research. Although denominational debates can lead to new directions for research, they noted, there remain topics about which discussion can threaten research.

The faculty felt that the popularity of such books as the *Left Behind* series was of particular concern. They were uncertain whether the books were read out of a thirst for theology, for mystery, or for both. These faculty found that theology has no central location and may not need one. As one consultant mentioned, theology faculty feel that they "speak 'faith' to the church, 'theology' to the academy, and 'spirituality' to draw popular interest" in order to thrive in this discipline.

C. Ethics and moral theology

Faculty teaching moral theology and ethics believe that their disciplines are more interwoven with other theological disciplines than they had previously realized and that they worked together effectively. They found that several particular ethical issues—such as evolutionary theory, abortion and reproductive rights, peacemaking and conflict resolution, and questions of economic justice—were very much on their students' minds as well as within the communities they serve. Recognizing that they tend to write more for clergy and other leaders than for parishioners or the public, these faculty found they were less comfortable handling such issues in a distinctively Christian, practical, and responsive way than in a technical, nuanced, and academic way.

The faculty questioned whether moral theology and ethics comprise an independent discipline or a subdiscipline of theology conceived in Schleiermacher's fourfold model of biblical, theological, historical, and practical

areas. They discussed whether their work should be oriented to addressing particular problems, crafting theoretical models, or both. They felt a need for scholarship in this area to address particular contexts, traditions, and communities, whether with theoretical models or practical solutions.

These faculty found that people in Christian communities appear to be, as one said, "not so much anti-intellectual as non-theological." They tend to define themselves by worship and community, rather than in terms of ethical prescriptions. Yet, Christian communities were crucial for giving clear direction for ethical and theological thought. Scholarship in this discipline, these consultants felt, was already helping such communities' leaders play a mediating role between theory and practice, and they should be supported to do so even more effectively.

In recontextualizing ethics and moral theology in its histories and present social locations, these consultants warned, theologians should take care not to become detached from the fundamental mysteries of the faith and not to over-concentrate on methodology. However, they also noted that methodological shifts such as womanist and other liberation theologies have enhanced the discipline by strengthening the place and voice of experience in theological discourse. Attending to specific cases in ethics and moral theology, and effectively applying methodological, historical, and social prolegomena to them, should enhance scholarly efforts to craft better resources. It was noted that a non-universal, as well as a non-traditional, stance may be required.

The consultants found that institutional supports, such as the Society for Christian Ethics, help hold the field together. This role was previously played by the *Journal for Religious Ethics*, but as the journal moves in other directions, its power to serve this function lessens. The tendency in the academy not to communicate theologically at all has made it difficult to know whether, and how, to do so in an effective manner. It also raised a question of whether academic discourse can work well in a church context at all. The faculty felt that academic presentations often seem remote from, and irrelevant to, the ecclesial, social, and political cultures in which they and their audiences work and live. They were concerned to establish scholarly and teaching methods that can bridge the gap between the lines of faith communities and their ethical and moral traditions and expertise present.

D. *Pastoral arts*

Pastoral arts and pastoral theology faculty had several areas of concern for theological scholarship, particularly in the context of ministerial formation. The overall desire was to enhance theological thought and discourse about communities ranging from classroom to seminary, church, and mission. They desire to see theological writing become less esoteric and narrow in focus and to create integrative, cross-disciplinary research that could bring learning from each theological discipline to bear on the others and on pastoral formation.

The faculty also noted that major themes of scholarly work in pastoral arts include the benefits and perils of integrative interdisciplinarity, its need to train formationally, its responsibility to conduct effective congregational ethnographic

studies, and questions regarding the loci for effective formation. They found that pastoral arts research needs to be more sensitive to actual church contexts, both historically and cross-culturally. Consultants also concluded that practical theology has a growing sense of self-confidence, along with the disciplinary sophistication to engage viable scholarly work.

These faculty raised questions about the kind of research that would contribute to the mission of faith communities and the broader culture. Recommended research included studies of cultural particularities, fragmentation and disintegration in civil society, and reemergent interest in Christianity and other religions. They also gave attention to questions of religion's negative as well as positive effects, the church's ability to make diversity a strength, and under what conditions a church accepts demise in order to preserve faithfulness to inherited tradition. They also recommended respect for and attention to biblical theology, not just systematic theology. At least one consultant noted that "research with no foundation in scripture is useless."

The faculty were also concerned to link practical theology to such things as earth care, health care, and the resurgence of religions and to craft self-critical scholarship from within as well as outside of religious and theological traditions. The faculty members recognized a shift in pastoral arts from an emphasis on Christological to Trinitarian issues such as hospitality, receptivity, and self-giving, with many implications for communally formed identity. They also recommended studying theological institutional and ecclesial administration as well as best practices in leadership for formation.

Churches, these faculty noted, tend to accept scholarship that addresses their concerns, such as with Bible or gender issues, particularly when they have a role in shaping it. Research methods and pedagogical models that enhance interaction between seminaries and churches, it was felt, strengthen the overall connection of church and seminary. The faculty noted that pastors and other church leaders must face the income and economic class differences in their churches and communities, the encroachment of suburbs into rural communities, and the stress on rural churches brought by difficult pastoral issues. Faculty need to help them learn how to address these issues effectively.

Faculty perceived the need for congregational studies that give attention to spiritual formation, strengthening corporate life, and congregational collaborations with other community service agencies. Consultation participants also encouraged research that examines the reconfiguration of ecumenical relationships in post-denominational contexts. One consultant summed up the challenge to pastoral arts faculty: "Congregations have a clear conception of the preaching, homily, and liturgy they hear regularly and need a way to find that conception expressed and understood by seminary faculty."

II. Theological scholarship and ecclesial communities

In order to assess the current state of theological scholarship and its future needs and direction in the context of ecclesial communities, the faculty consult-

ants were divided into groups organized by major religious tradition within contemporary North American Christianity: mainline Protestants, evangelical Protestants, and Roman Catholic and Orthodox scholars. Consultants were assigned to groups based on the primary identity of the institution where they teach. In these groups, consultants were asked to discuss questions related to the uniqueness of scholarship in each of these ecclesial communities, issues that have received too much or too little scholarly attention, and the kind of scholarship their ecclesial communities most need. They also discussed the conflicts that scholarly work can encounter with ecclesial concerns and how intellectually rigorous scholarship can best contribute to ecclesial life and practice. While these ecclesial traditions vary in many ways, some themes emerged across them all. Each group was concerned with maintaining denominational identity, the enabling and limiting roles of traditions, theological scholarship's place in theological education, and its multiple audiences. Each found that faith communities' expressed needs and desires may differ from those actually requiring attention. Each also had concerns particular to the ecclesial community and tradition in question.

A. *Faculty from mainline Protestant institutions*

Faculty teaching in mainline institutions found that the identity of mainline Protestantism is in flux. They see their seminaries becoming more ecumenical in student-body composition and in outlook than their churches. They also see their privileged status in North American religious and political discourse on the wane. With mainline Protestantism more removed from centers of power now than in the past, they questioned how to assess theological implications of those currently in power as well as how to do public theology most effectively at present, enabling people to think critically about public issues.

Faculty at mainline schools found that interfaith dialogue is more common than cross-denominational conversation and that much work needed to be done to assimilate laypersons into Christianity in general as well as into a particular denomination. They also noted that they are growing into the ability to extend inclusive, culturally attentive conversation beyond cultures of European origin. Securing identity in the context of the need to maintain both denominational particularity and ecumenical universality is a confused task, but it is eased when faculty are fostered in churches and maintain close ties to them.

Other issues concerning mainline identity included questions about how pedagogy, curriculum, and methodology in mainline institutions relate to fluctuations in mainline membership and how theological education contributes to this. The faculty would like to see more research on how and what to learn from communities that are growing—particularly African American congregations—or declining. They suggested that mainline Protestants, marginalized from the center of power and cultural esteem, could benefit from ethnographic analysis as well as ethnographic research on issues such as pedagogy, curriculum, and methodology in the wider academy. Also recommended were studies into par-

ticular church practices of theology and ecclesial self-reflection, and the scholarly resources that would be most helpful for both.

These faculty noted a general need not to let seminary work cut them off from the churches. Congregations often wrestle well with texts and issues that clergy and seminarians are reluctant to raise. They spoke of the danger of separating churches and clergy from either academic or public discourses, and of the need to patiently and supportively encourage clergy and congregations to think and participate critically within both.

Noting that "rigorous scholarship is life-giving," these faculty asked whether scholarship is less appreciated and valued than it should be. As the tenure and promotion systems in most mainline institutions demonstrate, the more mainline institutions and theologies were at the center of North American culture, the more comfortable these institutions were with universities and with academic discourse. The current questions of whether to prepare people for the academy or for ministry and whether one can conduct theological scholarship at all in an academic setting, are questions that emerge when secular academic disciplines dominate independent theological voice. The consultants felt that the dichotomy between academic and ministerial preparation was false but raised important questions. "Should we," one asked, "train our students in practical skills and hope they ultimately will find how best to use them?" or "should we train people in theological formation, then hope they figure out on their own what to do?" This dichotomy also struck them as false and pointed to the need for formational curricular integration.

The faculty noted that institutions of theological education should cede power neither to the secular academy nor to the churches. They said that they felt accountable to churches, the academy, their students, and to publishers. These faculty do not feel empowered, however, to challenge tenure and promotion standards or institutionalized disconnects from churches.

The faculty also noted, with some concern, that communities of faith appear to be questioning several issues that were accepted in the past, such as the validity and usefulness of historical criticism. They noted a vacuous spirituality in North American culture and students who have been formed more by popular than ecclesial culture. They also noted that churches complain about receiving candidates less than adequately prepared to preach or articulate their faith effectively. One consultant noted that while "seminaries want to create questions, churches want answers."

All of these issues make any disconnect of theological schools from ecclesial communities problematic. Faculty recommended giving congregations and students a solid foundation in denominational identity, enabling them to ask and handle difficult questions, and learning to see diversity as a positive aspect of a thriving community. The consultants felt that mainline spokespersons were often not prepared to speak on public issues from perspectives adequately informed by their traditions and their diverse contemporary presence. Questions of church identity, definition, and accountability were felt to be ongoing concerns for theological scholarship.

Mainline seminary faculty, both as theological educators and theological scholars, communicate with multiple audiences and in multiple ways. They perform mediating, explanatory functions once performed by denominational structures that are now greatly diminished. These faculty feel pressure to be up-to-date and relevant and to write good books for a wide audience within a context that otherwise encourages them to focus on truth questions without concern for potential applications. They noted that theological scholarship creates and nurtures its traditions in the midst of dialogue with communities of faith and that seminaries can do formation in ways that churches cannot. Schools are also able, through teaching and scholarship, both to clarify and to interrogate received traditions. They and their students share an interest in providing mediating grounds for addressing areas of conflict, although one consultant did ask whether the role should be to "provide teaching pastors to hold congregations together" or "prophets to break them down." Faculty also noted that a school's or a denomination's views on doctrinal issues, such as the authority of Scripture, impacted freedom in research and teaching. In terms of theologically contested matters, they noted, racial and gender diversity tended to be more legitimized than ecclesial diversity both in experience and as a topic for study and reflection.

B. *Faculty from Roman Catholic and Orthodox institutions*

Faculty consultants teaching at Roman Catholic and Orthodox institutions noted that the Roman Catholic Church takes scholarship very seriously, that Roman Catholics were numerous and diverse in North America, and that having a teaching magisterium outside of the academy and not responsible to it heavily affected the research agenda for theological scholars. As part of an ecclesial community with a long memory, these faculty felt that they could not serve their community well if ignorant of concerns and discourses outside of it. They noted, however, that research agenda can often depend upon changes in ecclesial receptivity and openness. The faculty noted a shift from scholarship on scholasticism as well as a plethora of research by non-Catholics on the 16th and 17th centuries. They said that they need more research into philosophical, scientific, and other intellectual resources—as well as "hard classical, metaphysical engagement"—that can address parishioners' needs. They also perceived a need to research matters of religious pluralism, and how to speak across disciplinary boundaries. In contrast to the dominant focus on scriptural authority in Protestant scholarship, these faculty felt that Catholic scholarship was influenced by papal, curial, and episcopal authority, and their implications.

Faculty consultants who teach in Orthodox institutions were relatively few in number at the consultation. They noted that the Orthodox churches have no magisterium comparable to that in the Roman Catholic Church, function along a scholastic model, and that contemporary Orthodox scholarship often appears frozen in its tradition. As a small minority in the West, the Orthodox sometimes develop what one faculty member called a "siege mentality" but seek nonetheless to transmit the tradition in critical ways.

The consultants felt that the Roman Catholic community benefits from a clarity of teaching authority, formative theology, diversity, sacramentality, and ecclesial traditions that other communities lack. They also felt that some Vatican offices discourage debate and conversation and act in ways that diminish freedom of inquiry and research quality. They felt that more attention was needed to questions of parishioner stewardship and to how well scholarly efforts help Catholics maintain and strengthen their faith. They were concerned about how scholarship might help retain young generations of observant faithful and transmit the faith in contemporary contexts. They were also concerned to create scholarship that could help guide people through the moral complexities of lay and clerical life.

The faculty were concerned to conduct research as part of a particular community and in relation to the entire church. They noted a tension between formational theology and the academic nature of theology's other branches. They also noted scholarly lacunae concerning emotional intelligence and integrity, the integration of affect into the dominant intellectual culture, and the relative lack of integration of scripture into theological studies. They were concerned to maintain spiritual community and ecclesial identity in the face of contrary cultural forces and a relative shallowness in popular understandings of church traditions. They said that Roman Catholic scholarship in North America needs to develop theologies responsive to the distinctive concerns and the intellectual social perspectives in current North American societies as Latin Americans and Europeans have for their respective cultural contexts.

These faculty also recommended that scholars study spiritual formation, the questions seminarians ask—such as "how do I know God?"—the ebbs and flows of faith, and whether there are predictable points of crises in spiritual awareness or maturation. They recommended scholarly attention be paid to limitations of freedom of inquiry, to criticism of the church as a proper task of theology, to theologies of the body and of sexuality and of their sacredness as well as to theologies of the resurrection and environmental theology.

The faculty consultants noted that a relative decline in the quality of students is making rigorous intellectual work less able to contribute to ecclesial life and practice. The decline in the status of ministry, it was felt, leads to less talented students, although international students were felt to be quite talented, and the best students were still perceived to be as good as in previous generations. Those in the (declining) middle are the ones who tend to go into parish ministry. Although seminarians often have a zeal for social issues, clericalism and deference to hierarchy are increasingly prevalent among both laity and clergy, which theological education and scholarship will need to take into account. Consultants recommended increasing continuing education participation, particularly by those in active parish ministry, and noted the need for scholarship on how best to reimagine teaching in order to serve lay students more effectively and to better connect teaching to practice.

The consultants were concerned about trends that make theological education resemble theological and hierarchical indoctrination. This trend was particularly troubling when it occurred amid advances in critical thinking, historical perspective, and sensitivity to different locations and presuppositions, without taking notice of them. It was felt that indoctrination or rigidity of any kind presented problems for theological scholarship as well as education. Likewise, the faculty members asked whether, given the range of inherited theologies and practices, Roman Catholics have a viable, commonly accepted definition of formation.

Roman Catholic and Orthodox faculty were and remain concerned to lift up the voices of the oppressed and marginalized in theological education, as they felt was done in biblical texts. Similarly, they felt a need to engage more carefully in dialogue those with differing perspectives, but also to rediscover what one consultant called "our essential and commonly held convictions about our relationships to God, the world, and each other" in the midst of recognizing differences.

C. *Faculty from Evangelical institutions*
Faculty consultants from evangelical Protestant institutions felt that the term "evangelical" includes distinct traditions and is not helpful as a hegemonic category, and they were concerned not to lose the threads of distinctive denominational histories by collapsing these differences into a single ecclesial family. Finding that the evangelical community looks unified only from without, these consultants advocated nurturing dialogue across the heterogeneous traditions among evangelical Protestants.

Faculty from these institutions also felt that evangelical theological scholarship and education reflects well the distinctive evangelical difference concerning the scholarly task and the interests of its receiving communities. Their research and teaching focus on matters of individual spiritual growth and are removed from larger social and political concerns. Additionally, it was felt that traditions as diverse as Reformed, Arminian, and Southern Baptist, for example, have more in common regarding theological methodology than in particular conclusions. They all affirm the revelatory authority of the biblical text, commitment to the lordship of Jesus Christ, and a pietistic attention to the person and teaching of Jesus.

These consultants believe that their work reflects the binding nature and revelatory authority of biblical texts, whether as a constraint or as a liberation, and that their students desire more contact with the texts themselves and not only with issues raised from them. In addition to this priority given to Scripture, they noted, there is effort among evangelicals to understand more readily their sense of Scripture's authority, of a renewed commitment to evangelism, and a tendency to draw from Reformed thinking in the manner of Karl Barth. They noted a waning of interest in enhancing ties with other Christian traditions. Similarly, these faculty have found convergence around ethics, particularly sexual ethics, between evangelicals and Roman Catholics.

Consultants from evangelical institutions said that they find it a challenge to maintain evangelical identity in classrooms that include a wide range of traditions and perspectives. They noted that evangelicals' positions in Asia, Latin America, and Africa give them the opportunity to do research with a global reach and perspective, but that this is challenged in areas with slackened church growth and waning influence, such as Southeast Asia and the United States. Many institutions are finding that students from outside the United States attend evangelical schools because of their theological methodology, not the educational program content. Nonetheless, biblical literacy and content were perceived as important concerns for theological curricula.

Faculty at evangelical institutions said that their research is often driven, but not forced, by expressed needs of evangelical faith communities. Because many evangelical faculty hold core convictions vital to their and their students' communities, they felt, it was natural to express them in ways that their communities consider useful. Evangelical systematic theologians therefore do theology primarily for evangelicals and find their work unknown, even unwelcome, in wider academic discourse. This non-coerced attachment appears to be based on creedal convictions more than constituencies. The faculty felt that if their constituencies' convictions were to change, they themselves would feel "left behind."

Likewise, the consultants felt that evangelical seminary faculty should be personally committed to the communities they serve and to the expressed faith of those communities. They perceived that because mainline institutions function in a similar way, evangelicals are often excluded. These faculty seek common ground among themselves and foster nurturing interaction and dialogue when they do, despite the difficulty they feel in the context of much contemporary academic discourse.

The consultants felt that evangelical scholarship was weak in its ability to do theological critiques, *vis à vis* that in mainline institutions. They encouraged commentary writers to distinguish the fruits of exegesis from creedal commitments and remind scholarship to distinguish a text's meaning and its authority. They noted a tendency in evangelical students to pursue PhDs at present for dialogic, not apologetic, reasons, which is a shift from previous generations.

Evangelical laity, these faculty noted, tend to find most benefit in popularized scholarly work that recommends specific practices for spiritual growth and discipleship. They favored the tendency of evangelical communities to disseminate information and relevant scholarship widely and effectively. They recognized, however, that not everyone was equipped or trained to do both popular and academic work, despite pressures to do so and despite their commitment to serve the church more than the academy in their writing. On this point, faculty members felt that scholarship focused more on academic than ecclesial discourse tended to be written out of concerns for tenure and promotion. However, evangelical pastoral arts faculty have found that they could get tenure recognition for what they termed "engaged" contributions more easily than colleagues in other disciplines. It was also noted, however, that when churches and seminaries

believe that the church's needs drive the seminary's work, that, "the seminary's prophetic voice is not always welcome."

Even with these ecclesially focused commitments, evangelical faculty still felt that they valued theological scholarship and education more than evangelical pastors and other non-academicians. They have found that ground-breaking research is difficult to justify as relevant to faith communities, however important it might be to the seminary and the wider academy.

The faculty noted that the confessional statements they often must sign in order to teach in evangelical institutions serve to ensure a confessional center and were misapplied when used to prescribe or delimit appropriate research methodologies. Important as such statements may be to responding to and codifying the perceived needs of the communities, how they shape scholarship should be up to individual faculty members to decide, they said.

Although hopeful about the future of evangelical institutions, these faculty also noted what some consultants termed "a climate of fear" among evangelical scholars that inhibits creative, constructive theological reflection. It is more difficult at present than previously to plan an experiment or develop a new idea without worrying that one will be accused of "theological innovation," even when one's scholarship is sound. The pressure to be seen as sufficiently conservative—to research and write mindful of the tradition and of one's competitors in this regard—was also noted. The importance of having senior faculty mentor more junior faculty to understand and thrive within their complex accountabilities to the academy and to churches was highlighted as well.

Evangelical faculty were concerned about a deep anti-intellectualism in North American evangelical communities—a pietism militating against the life of the mind. They worried about a popular perception that, as one consultant put it, "the higher you go in education, the less likely you are to love Jesus." Some of the anti-intellectualism was felt to arise from a scholarly disconnect from the churches' styles of communication and learning. Some was felt to come from a suspicion of learning or a perception of elitism. Church people, the consultants felt, would benefit from readable and sound scholarly materials in place of television and radio evangelism and of some widely circulated evangelical publications.

The faculty perceived a need for evangelicals to engage critically the postmodern intellectual climate and its polyvalence, indeterminacy, and subjectivity without losing confessional identity. They noted that evangelical scholars have begun to adopt intellectual models developed in the European Enlightenment just as the wider intellectual community is moving beyond them. They suggested that their task was to help students work through as well as beyond Enlightenment models to post-modern models—all in ways consonant with evangelical traditions. One faculty member noted that clergy, laity, and students "often don't need answers, but the endurance of their questions." The consultants considered it wise to work to meet this particular need.

For evangelicals, a curricular coherence emerges from conviction and intention in light of faith, which also seems to bind faculty to a common mission and give students a clear sense of the institution's educational mission. They were concerned, however, by their communities' inability to decide whether a seminary should be more like a university or a professional school. They noted that key to institutional success in coherence and mission was that the mission be stated clearly and be corporately owned by the key stakeholders, particularly faculty and trustees. They questioned, in this light, the wisdom of increasing their presidents' responsibilities in fundraising, which leaves theological leadership primarily to academic deans.

Overall, evangelical school faculty seek to be partners with administrators and staff. As teachers, not pastors, they feel unclear about whether they are responsible for equipping their students with character formation as well as particular skills for ministry. They believe that their students still need direct contact with primary texts, materials, and sources. That is, their students seek to integrate their learnings and to benefit from curricula organized toward formation.

Similarly, evangelical faculty noted that the megachurch and parachurch phenomena are ongoing concerns, as is evangelicals' easy mobility between ecclesial communities and traditions. Although able to connect with expressed ecclesial and cultural needs, megachurches and parachurch organizations have encouraged less-than-adequate academic training and exacerbate the need for evangelical seminaries to be market-driven. Faculty members have found that the role of such communities was to, as one consultant put it, "get people evangelized," enabling them to move to other communities of faith, often with seminary-trained leaders. Overall, these concerns reminded evangelical faculty of their need to understand their constituency and respond to its concerns without allowing popular opinion to shape the whole of their agenda or exercise undue influence over their research and teaching.

Evangelical faculty also noted that African Americans, Asians, and Latino(a)s are becoming more of a presence in their institutions. They noted that few of these people accept the label "evangelical," finding the social and political positions taken by many evangelicals to be quite alien to them. There is often a shared evangelical conviction that many academic theological methodologies threaten matters vital to the faith, particularly the authority of Scripture and received interpretations of it, making issues long thought settled once again open for question. The faculty felt that seminary studies, in order to be applicable to these students, had to respond primarily to students' and their communities' concerns, and privilege the telling of individual and communal histories and stories in the learning process. Doing so, the consultants have found, enables faculty and churches, as well as students, to make the integrative connections sought between the elements in theological scholarship, theological education, and the wider culture.

III. Theological scholarship and theological education

The consultant groups in the third conversation were arranged diversely according to demographic criteria and institutional commitments. They discussed questions concerning the relationship of theological scholarship to theological education. There were nine primary areas that they brought to notice and concern. These areas were issues of diversity, educational technology, cross-disciplinary and integration issues, cross-cultural issues, student ability, the goals of theological education, faculty issues related to vocation and research, faculty issues related to teaching and learning, and issues specifically related to the theological curriculum.

Diversity

Concern was raised that faculty who are members of racial/ethnic communities are expected to teach, and at times only teach, works that emerge from members of their community or on issues the community has raised as concerns. It was also noted that texts were needed to help students understand how the forms of thought and discourse in white and in racial/ethnic communities shape them, in order for them to be effective ministers in churches. The faculty recommended cross-disciplinary teaching and research to address this concern. The faculty have found that a diverse student body benefits students by requiring them to deal with and accept a wide range of students within a shared community. On that basis, the students can approach and appreciate differences in learning styles and ways of reasoning. The incredible diversity of background, age, race, ethnicity, and theological orientation, it was noted, is a good resource for teaching and research. Faculty members recommended that accrediting standards integrally reflect the concern to enhance diversity and its functions in theological schools.

Educational technology

The beneficial ability of contemporary information technology in the classroom to identify scholars and works of scholarship in particular areas, or enabling professors from outside the classroom to post papers and respond to student questions, were noted. Students are often quite technologically aware, which suggested to the faculty that its uses be maximized, with student input as appropriate. How greatly technology signifies a turn away from books and other printed texts is a matter of debate, although faculty do perceive decreasing library use *vis à vis* accessing information online. Library staff, especially, must be aware of appropriate resources.

Information technology also enhances the potential for distance education, and the scholars were negative to cautiously optimistic about its potential. Distance education reaches some students who would otherwise not be reached, although it is still costly. Faculty also noted that face-to-face interactions were vital to the learning process—to counter a perceived trend to passive learning in distance education and elsewhere—and that information technology was most

useful when its advantages to theological learning outweighed its disadvantages. Online class discussions, some faculty found, have been positive, with students able to address issues with one another that they cannot do with their professors. The faculty recommended that scholarship explore the future of online education and its implications for religious and academic communities.

Cross-disciplinary and integration issues

Enhancing connections and dialogue among academic disciplines, faith communities, and theological education was seen as a model for curricular integration in formation, although the difficulties that theological disciplines have in learning others' discourses remain a concern. Faculty felt that seminaries needed to intentionally encourage cross-disciplinary communication and interaction in order to facilitate a wide sharing of learning models, methodologies, expectations, and conclusions, although they noted that certain areas of needed expertise for theological faculty, such as empirical psychology, pay too little attention to theological discourses or communities. The phenomenal growth in specialized theological scholarship, owing to the resources brought to bear through sabbaticals, foundation grants, and publishers' needs as well as to the opportunities brought by increased learning and enhanced ways of sharing it, was noted as a challenge to disciplinary mastery, but also as an opportunity to enhance scholarship through more sustained interaction.

Writing fewer, but better, books was recommended highly. Faculty noted that collaborative works needed to be valued in tenure and promotion if they were to be done effectively. Combining the skills of narrowly focused specialists with those of wide-reading synthesists was thought capable of producing better work than having scholars working in isolation. This sort of integration was recommended for small teams to work on but not for institutions to advocate all at once. It is likely to remain an issue for an entire faculty in the context of its particular vocation and not just for individual faculty members. The institution's mission and practices, they noted, need to value appropriately such things as collaborative research, formational theology, and cross-disciplinary integration if they are to become part of its culture. In addition, such work must remain cognizant of its theological and ecclesial traditions in order to craft scholarship, teaching methods, and learning situations that are critically engaged and missiologically competent, as well as encouraging learning that is intuitive as well as intellectual. The faculty noted that many students draw firmer disciplinary lines and are less integrated than is ideal. They felt a need for students to integrate their learnings and to feel comfortable as well as challenged to ask appropriate questions.

Cross-cultural issues

The faculty consultants were concerned with the need to broaden the perspectives of both faculty and students in theological education regarding cross-cultural issues as well as collaborative scholarly interests that intersect them. Texts used in theological education were felt to cover the material

adequately; the challenge is to produce works that help students to better address cross-cultural issues in congregational and other ministry settings. They also noted the need, particularly for U.S. institutions, to understand and articulate theology within a global context, to understand the variety of perspectives different from those most common among Americans, and to attend as academics to issues and scholarly resources emerging from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The purpose would be not to replace one set of concerns with another, but to ensure that each is made known in the hearing of the others. Having formation programs that expose students to a range of religions and denominations was encouraged, particularly in light of the perceived waning of ecumenical dialogue in the past generation. The reluctance of some students from outside a North American context to engage in classroom dialogue was noted, resulting in faculty teaching more by lecturing than they consider pedagogically advisable. This situation suggests a need to craft strategies for empowering all students to engage in dialogue and critique.

One possible integrating platform recommended was to center research and teaching curricula on two things: the limit to any one individual's or community's scope and range, and the ways in which matters of local and particular concern raise up issues that have importance for many—teasing thick threads of description into more universal strands of inquiry.

Student ability

The faculty consultants felt that contemporary theological students have what they described as "a different kind of literacy" than previous generations and that it decisively shapes teaching. This description typically includes postmodern formation; sometimes includes biblical literacy or superficial experiences with several religious traditions; but less frequently a liberal arts, historical, philosophical, or church background. In addition, because the culture itself is less theologically formed than in the past and diversity is common in many manifestations, students bring fewer common referents or common skills.

Theology in general was felt to be difficult to teach at present. In addition, students are more attracted to what they call "spirituality" than to theology itself. Contemporary students are accustomed to such things as Internet research and PowerPoint lectures with written outlines, but less accustomed to attentive listening in lectures or in discursive seminars. Some faculty felt that certain concepts crucial to theological learning simply could not be presented in visual media. Overall, the faculty felt a need to increase biblical literacy as well as pastoral arts work, particularly at first. They felt that by the second year of seminary, students could become biblically, if not theologically, literate, and would tend still to rely on their own theological vernacular, having yet to learn a theological discourse that can be shared more readily.

Faculty find their students better able to dramatize, memorize, or perform course material than to prepare a footnoted essay. Critical reflection pieces are rarer for students to have written—particularly second-career students—

although being able to think critically in technical ways is more common for second-career students. Younger students tend to arrive with some degree of rigidity—whether liberal or orthodox—while older students tend to understand ambiguities better and to be more engaging. Faculty perceived that any ideological rigidity was an unwelcome source of tension. They felt a need for students and faculty to articulate their motivations and negotiate a shared community of discourse through, or at least in spite of, areas of disagreement.

The rise in the number of students who commute to school limits the ability to sustain conversations between classes, chapel worship, and so forth. It is increasingly difficult, faculty have found, to form a community or conduct effective formation programs with part-time and commuting students. Part-time students have difficulty finding cohesion in the curriculum, although faculty find these students themselves to be committed to their work and more likely to be able to integrate its various components. Course cutbacks and reductions in the number and scope of required courses, it was felt, militate against effective learning and collegiality.

Generally, students' needs and preparation were considered decisive in shaping curricula and the agenda for the scholarship that feeds them. Students' past experiences with vocation, job, or church were felt not to be reliable indicators of their potential success in ministerial leadership. Although considering themselves reluctant to take risks, the faculty encouraged themselves to stretch their capabilities in order to meet the needs of their diverse—and diversely prepared—students, and also to stretch their students in order to further develop their abilities.

Theological education and the mission of formation

Faculty members said that moving students from a first to a second naïveté is, perhaps, the crucial issue in formation, although they also sensed a tension between academic excellence and ministerial preparedness. They felt called to teach the Bible in the context of exegesis, not prayer, for example, and to help students shape a theologically engaged worldview, possibly in the context of such concepts as forgiveness and healing, and with attention to personal motivations and individual distinctions.

Distance learning, the faculty noted, was especially challenging to formation. Other professions have standard materials and an accepted comprehensive exam or equivalent to test mastery. Theological education, particularly regarding formation, was felt not to have the equivalent and not to need it. Consultants thought, instead, that it was important to ground responsibility for spiritual formation in multiple areas of accountability. They said that Protestant institutions could learn much from Roman Catholic institutions' formation programs, particularly those for laypeople that included topics such as conflict resolution, professional boundary issues, ministerial public and personal persona, and discernment. Demonstrations of appropriate academic knowledge and ecclesial awareness, as well as of the abilities to learn and to help a faith community thrive, were considered essential indicators of success in ministerial formation.

The faculty consultants found the missional context for theological education to be complex. It involves equipping pastors, priests, and others as leaders who are custodians of the churches' traditions as well as agents of their transformation. For some, it involves the complex task of preparing scholar-pastors. It also involves maintaining connections and accountabilities to the academy as well as to the church, particularly in light of required classes and in contexts mixing undergraduate and graduate education. It leads scholars to question whether their task is both to reproduce information and mold ordained and lay leaders for ministry, even if the integration of the tasks is only accomplished individually. Faculty were also concerned about their role in helping certify individuals for ordained ministry, particularly in ecclesial contexts that are less careful in whom they allow to be ordained.

Faculty issues related to vocation and research

The faculty felt that they lacked, but needed to have had, preparation for teaching in their doctoral programs as well as ongoing formation regarding teaching once one holds a faculty position. Teaching, they felt, should be seen as a call, and particularly one that includes a willingness to help students think through difficult theological, formational, and pastoral issues, and for both teacher and student to address social issues as well. Faculty felt a need for more time to conduct research and writing. They also felt compelled to lead the way in integrating commitments to theology, academic discourse, and the church, so that churches would not perceive seminary professors simply as possessing expensively obtained esoteric knowledge that they (the churches) could not handle or comprehend. The faculty felt that laity could grasp current scholarship and its benefits if they were presented in a welcoming and accessible manner.

Faculty members noted a prejudice against multiply authored works in theological scholarship but thought that institutional stakeholders outside of particular educational institutions, such as publishers and accreditors, might help legitimate them. Similarly, the faculty felt that students' expressed needs or demonstrated confusions should be more influential in determining textbooks, introductions, and other pedagogical resources. Because students often first encounter questions about their own beliefs and practices while reading such works, authors must keep this tendency in mind as they envision their target audience. Consultants perceived that contemporary did not so much resist learning new things as they lack sufficient context from which to learn them for the vocational ministry settings to which many will go as graduates.

The faculty felt that binary oppositions—such as between higher and lower learning, the theoretical and the practical, winners and losers in the curriculum or profession, or the useful versus the honorable—were not helpful. The scholar's vocation, however, whether it be to the academy, the church, or both, needs clarification. Faculty consultants expressed a desire to see current research—their own included—have an impact on the classroom. Interactions between theological education and theological scholarship were felt to form bridges

between faculty and student concerns. Faculty felt compelled to keep up with current research for the benefit of their scholarship and their students, although they often find it helpful to maintain a topical and methodological distinction between the two tasks. The faculty asked whether the goal of theological education was preparation for ministerial or for academic vocation, or for a blend of both. The consultants felt that more research was needed in formation and for the benefit of formation programs. Theological scholarship, they felt, should study the best practices of teaching, research, and service within theological education itself.

Faculty issues related to teaching and learning

The faculty consultants found that students have a difficult time with critical thinking but that pedagogical practices such as critically reviewing draft essays or plotting effective arguments help them overcome this difficulty. Students also have difficulty distinguishing plagiarism from proper citation, discerning appropriate resources for theological reflection and argumentation, crafting essays with sustained non-personal arguments, and composing research papers.

The consultants thought it imperative to teach and conduct scholarship cross-culturally and collaboratively in the context of the contemporary diversity of students and of faith communities. They are concerned to distinguish techniques of pedagogy from those of andragogy (the teaching of adult learners), and to know when to use which. The faculty also felt concerned to address and anticipate students' crises of faith, as often occasioned by introducing historical/critical methodology, for example, or by attempting to move them from a first to a second naïveté, or from skill at deconstruction to skill at reconstruction. They felt that having teachers and students of different faiths presented a challenge in the classroom. They also find it imperative to invite students to struggle individually and communally with the material. Faculty members desire to help students see that the material is multifaceted, not monolithic, and that their questions are legitimate and often enlightening.

Having scholars and pastors articulate together a common ground for MDiv education was found to strengthen programs and expose critical issues. Faculty also felt a need to develop what they called a "spiritual theology" of theological teaching and learning. Doctoral seminars and interdisciplinary work are helpful bridges between areas of commitment and concern. In order to help theological scholarship lead to integrated learning, the faculty recommended that syllabi reflect diverse perspectives and that such a requirement count in tenure review.

Faculty also sensed that they needed to be trained to be more effective mentors for their students. Given their students' diversity of backgrounds, preparation, community, and experience, skill in mentoring is an increasingly important pedagogical resource. Faculty also considered that they often did therapeutic work in the classroom, helping students better understand themselves, and that this was integral to effective formation.

Scholarship, they felt, should be seen as a community of conversation—a dialogue between the present and the past in which the past can become

supportive within the present. Faculty consultants were encouraged by the integrative force that such models of community and conversation could produce, whether or not scholarship and teaching in theological education can ever be integrated fully. The question was raised whether theological scholarship should be imagined as a kind of pilgrimage—challenging the mind, but touching the heart as well—in the context of developing a spirituality of learning, often in a biographical or autobiographical context. Faculty consultants encouraged addressing such pedagogical topics as biblical studies practically as well as theoretically, and not simply from a single angle or perspective. Requiring a sermon outline at the end of an exegetical paper or developing a teaching series on pneumatology for children or adults were given as examples of how to do this in practice.

The faculty members felt that their students, like the parishes they may eventually serve, needed the concepts required to use theology and address effectively religious and demographic diversities. They have also found that students like to have tangible results early in a learning process before moving into deeper theological engagement and that some styles of theological expression are more immediate and gratifying than others. Having scholars write in a style that demonstrates connections between experience, scholarship, and pedagogy has been helpful in this regard.

The faculty consultants also noted that theology must always be understood contextually and that pedagogies must account for this, refusing to privilege any voice and maintaining a sense of collaboration on a common project. While allowing for a wide range of learning styles, faculty and institutions also feel constrained to articulate and teach toward measurable and clear outcomes and to ensure that theological learning is integrated as early as possible. Capstone classes, church/ordination statements, and the like can help fill this need. They recommended that learning be embodied, relating context to experience, and focusing academic research on social contexts and needs.

Curriculum issues

Consultants noted, concerning the curriculum, that there was a need for students to be able to select elective courses that would allow more room for contributions from faculty scholarship. Noting the difficulty of standardizing curricula across diverse institutions, the faculty were still concerned to shape curricula that integrated student learnings well and helped students move to deeper and more secure foundations for their faith, rather than simply stripping them of illusions and credulity. Christianity's own fractures, it was noted, would do well to be overcome by so deep and shared a sense of common purpose.

The faculty felt that making integrative connections across the curriculum was chiefly their responsibility. Students, they felt, still needed to be challenged to master difficult tasks, such as reading systematic theology and to learn not to unlearn such theoretical material in the context of internships or fieldwork. Integrative curricula, it was felt, could not proceed simply on a course-by-course

or *ad hoc* basis but needed to be system-wide. Faculty were concerned to present theological education as not simply technical or practical instruction but as a scholarly and intellectual enterprise for which good scholarship from faculty and students is required.

The balance of required to elective courses, the difficulties imposed by commuters' schedules, the challenges brought by distance learners, and attempts to integrate curricula for multiple programs only some of which are dedicated to ministerial preparation were noted as areas of concern for the theological curriculum. Some younger students' desires to be in ministry, but not in church ministry, also challenge curricula on levels ranging from topics taught to field placements arranged. Denominational pressures for a so-called "Second Track" ministry, in which candidates seek credentials but also avoid immersion in the seminary experience, were seen as not necessarily honoring the seminary's curricula or the faith tradition. The relative drop in biblical literacy (except among evangelicals) was noted as another curricular concern; evangelicals' frequent preference for practical and not theoretical questions was also noted as being of curricular concern. The interest in packaging courses for shorter time periods or on weekends was also expressed.

In sum, the theological faculty consultants felt that they frequently found themselves called to ask as well as answer the question: "what is the value of a traditional theological education?" before a wide, varied, and changing set of audiences in the classroom, in the academy, and in communities of faith. They felt that their conversations on this topic had enhanced their ability to answer it well.

CONCLUSION

The May 2003 Luce Consultation's three sets of conversations did not seek a common theme but by the end had worked their way toward one. That theme would be that the major task facing theological scholarship is to reimagine its discrete disciplines and understandings in the light of the complex tasks of theological education as well as ministerial and academic preparation. The faculty consultants, by and large, recommended ways to concentrate theological education and scholarship on the tasks and resources needed to shape ministerial and scholarly formation as an integrated and integrative process. This process, as they began to envision it, would be one that has increasing integrity with respect to faculty and students, as well as to the wide range of theological education institutions themselves, the communities of faith that they serve, the academy, and the broader public.

Crafting Research that will Contribute to Theological Education

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ABSTRACT: As theological educators, we continually strive to balance the needs of the church with the demands of the academy—practical scholarship versus theological scholarship. Moreover, we grapple with the forming distinctions between religious studies and theological studies. With increasing public interest in religious and spiritual issues today, theological scholarship must have something to say that takes advantage of this increasing interest in religion. Scholars associated with seminaries must learn to express their research and scholarship in ways that gain them hearings as public intellectuals or theologians. Although this essay cannot offer precise instructions for how to craft one's research, it does make suggestions about how to take steps that will support crafting research that contributes to theological education.

Introduction

For a number of reasons that will become clear, I cannot offer precise instructions for how to craft your research to contribute to theological education. I can, in view of the context of theological education today, make some suggestions about how we can take steps that will support crafting research that contributes to theological education.

As a historian, I thought a good place to start might be with the study done by H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, and James Gustafson during the mid-1950s.[1] The first thing that strikes the modern-day reader is just how dramatically things have changed.

Their study concluded that seminaries, in general, were too oriented toward the needs of the churches and not enough directed toward exercising the mind.

> The Protestant schools of theology . . . along with all other schools are subject to the tensions inescapably given with this duality of academic functions [intellectual pursuit of knowledge and teaching]. But on the whole they are less bothered by them than they might be, for in their relation to the churches they have chosen or been required to devote themselves primarily to the second, that is, to the teaching function of schools. Their express purpose is to educate men who will direct the affairs of church institutions, especially local churches. They tend in consequence to neglect the first function of a theological school— the exercise of the intellectual love of God and neighbor.[2]

James Laney observed in the 1970s that the faculties of the 1950s "were grounded in and expressed faith . . . there was no question of their identity with the people of God. . . . theirs was an age when church and society and learning were still seen to be compatible if not congenial. That era is past."[3]

Faculty members during the 1950s were "churchmen" who, according to the Niebuhr study, were "subject to overburdensome demands." Most seminaries gave their professors the same "professorial" rank and a common salary. The salary, in most cases, was very low. Faculty members earned extra money preaching and teaching in the churches—leaving little time for serious scholarship. The study did stress the differences between university-related divinity schools, where there was "greater stimulus" for research and writing, and denominational seminaries, where faculties seemed often "to become intellectually and spiritually 'ingrown.'" Nonetheless, the 471 professors who participated in the study possessed "an impressive number of publications . . . equally divided between scholarly works and books written for the practical edification of the church." The footnote indicates that many of the professors "reported publications of the latter type only."[4]

Before addressing Niebuhr's understanding of good theological scholarship, I want first to consider the changing context of theological education since the mid-1950s. I cannot cover everything. Nor can I cover extensively the things I do mention. But I need to note some of the changes in the past five decades affecting both theological education and theological scholarship.

The changing context

First, the composition of ATS schools has changed dramatically since the mid-1950s. The Niebuhr study concentrated on some ninety Protestant theological seminaries in the United States and studied extensive data from thirty-six of them, covering a twenty-year period (1934–1954). All but one ATS member school participated, and many nonmember schools participated as well. I do not have precise figures for the 1950s, but, by 1964, ATS had ninety-one accredited schools, 80 percent of which were mainline Protestant schools. By 1994, there were 189 accredited members, approximately 44 percent mainline, 30 percent conservative or evangelical Protestant, and 26 percent Roman Catholic/Orthodox.

Today there are 251 member schools. Roughly 43 percent are Protestant schools associated with the old "mainline" (including Anabaptist/Mennonite schools), 34 percent are self-described evangelical schools, and 23 percent are Roman Catholic/Orthodox schools. The realities associated with the post-denominational age of the twenty-first century have brought vast differences within each of these categories as well. The Association, composed of homogeneous schools in the 1950s, now possesses a membership of incredibly heterogeneous schools that are now connected, as Dan Aleshire put it in 1994, "to the entire range of North American Christianity."[5] Given this diversity, it is much

harder today to suggest a formula for precisely how theological scholarship can be crafted to benefit theological education.

Equally important for our contemporary context is the development of religious studies as a separate discipline. Ray Hart, in a study during the late 1980s, noted that the Niebuhr study occurred just as "'religious studies,' . . . was beginning its ascendancy in the form that has prevailed since."[6] In the 1950s, few were separating religious studies from theological studies. It is different today. As the Hart study revealed, religious studies has become the designator referring to "the scholarly neutral . . . study of multiple religious traditions." Theological studies is more "ambiguous in its reference" and "comprises an academic enterprise about which many are ambivalent and to which some are hostile."[7] For example, the North American Association for the Study of Religion has made clear its argument that religious studies departments should not include theologians because they believe in God. Donald Wiebe states the bottom line: "There's the academic study of religion, and there's the religious study of religion."[8] The former is scholarly and critical; the other is not. The assumption here, of course, is that "'real scholars' publish for the academy, not the church."[9]

Hart's study demonstrates there are many religious scholars who believe theological study is inherently "anti-intellectual." A significant number of faculty members, if not the majority, teaching in seminaries today completed their doctoral work in departments specializing in religious studies, not theological studies. Increasing numbers of faculty have not received even a master's degree in a seminary setting. What impact have negative views of theological scholarship had on newly-minted scholars who, upon graduation, end up working in seminary settings? Or are these concerns simply overstated?[10]

The church, of course, does contain many, even among its leadership, perhaps even in seminaries, who model all too well the kind of anti-intellectual strand of theology denounced by those who look down their noses on theological scholarship. Some faculty in seminaries face serious pressure from a sponsoring denomination to produce practical scholarship emphasizing those things that will help graduates become "practically trained ministers." Many professors in Hart's study complained that their "academic work . . . is perpetually insecure and unappreciated, and sometimes reviled." They even complain that their administrators side with the church.[11]

The anti-intellectualism resident in the church is not a new development since the 1950s. In 1962, Jaroslav Pelikan believed it necessary to remind readers that the Christian tradition once included the attitude that "being an intellectual meant being a Christian."[12] The problems facing many faculty members today indicate the continuing strength of cultural anti-intellectualism generally found in America.[13]

There is little doubt, as George Marsden has argued, that one of the broader shifts in American culture affecting theology has been "from the intellectual and the theoretical to the psychological and the relational." This has amplified

the historical tendency of anti-intellectualism toward the "anthropocentric celebration of the self," making Christianity a "means to self-fulfillment."[14]

Today's brand of anti-intellectualism in the church is also connected to a new form of consumerism in American religion, perhaps an even bigger threat. Many shrinking denominations suffering financially have increasingly valued what sells in American religion—what will help congregations grow—more than what will help them understand and express Christian faith more clearly. This is part of the context facing seminaries today.

The growth of religious studies and prejudice against theological scholarship has led theologians to think more critically about the relation of theological studies to religious studies. ATS has sponsored a number of these conversations. Don Browning questioned in 1995 "the widely held belief that there is a serious tension, if not an outright conflict." He stressed compatibility between the two "styles of scholarship." The "primary goal of both," he wrote, is

> to increase critical self-understanding about the religious traditions that have formed our culture, institutions, and moral sensibility. . . . Both approaches entail elements of self-involvement typical of any act of self-discovery and self-understanding . . . [and both] should follow publicly accountable methods of scholarship and aspire for a critical understanding of these traditions. . . . The major difference between scholarship in religious studies and theological education is the degree and kind of epistemological distance they each achieve.[15]

Using Gadamer and Heidegger, Browning pointed out that all human scholarship "must necessarily and inescapably begin with . . . the pre-understandings, prejudgments, and veritable 'prejudices' that we bring to the understanding process." He used Ricoeur's work to stress that the distance achieved by any scholar from these pre-understandings must always be understood as "under the prior state of belongingness." Therefore, "critical distance" is always "more modest in its ambitions" than previously recognized. There is no absolute objectivity anywhere, in either approach to religion. So the difference is only a matter of "the kind of epistemological distance they each achieve."[16]

Those responding to Browning took a number of contrasting positions. George P. Schner, a Catholic scholar, emphasized the long history of "intellectually credible" work done in the service of the church. He argued that theological scholarship must contribute to the various practical work of the church and should enhance both teaching and theological education. Ellen Leonard, a Catholic feminist theologian, took issue with the way Browning's approach subsumed theology under religious studies. For her, theological studies and religious studies are "two distinct disciplines with their own content and contexts." She underlined the need to keep theological studies connected with real religious communities where the "effective history" of women can be taken seriously.

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Peter C. Phan, Walter Kaiser, and a couple of others, emphasized the distinctiveness of theological scholarship by placing the difference not within Browning's category of "epistemological distance" but rather within "intrinsic characteristics" found in the discipline of theology itself. "The drought of the absence of God from theological discussion," Kaiser proclaimed, "should be ended." Browning responded that he did not necessarily disagree, but that he was "attempting to sneak the camel into the skeptic's tent" by using "softer language."[17]

Browning's hermeneutical approach highlights the importance of the postmodern critique of Enlightenment rationality since the 1950s. Postmodern thinkers argue that there is no such thing as disinterested reasoning, and this is Browning's approach to the connection between religious studies and theological studies. All thought is shaped by its historical context. Every community is shaped by its traditions and by the symbols it uses to illuminate meaning. This affirmation, of course, calls into question the existence of a universal common morality[18] and attempts to bridge the chasm between religious studies and theological studies.

Does this mean that the only things left are nihilism, skepticism, and relativism? If these things are all that remain, there is not much reason to talk about the relationship between theological scholarship and religious scholarship at all. The nihilist says moral truths do not exist. The skeptic claims moral beliefs are not justified. The relativist says moral beliefs only apply to one's own community.

Jeffrey Stout, in his book *Ethics After Babel*, has rejected nihilism, skepticism, and relativism. But he has also recognized that the belief that communities can rightly represent universal morality is not likely either. Stout makes a distinction between justification and truth. He points out that justification is relative, while truth is not.[19] As an example, Stout offers the proposition that "slavery is evil." While he believes that statement to be universally true, he recognizes that some people who lived long ago, perhaps a thousand years ago, may have been justified, given their knowledge and understanding at the time, in their belief that slavery was acceptable. For Stout, it is possible that there exists some universal set of true moral propositions. But, given human finitude, it is unlikely that human beings will ever possess accurate knowledge of its content.

To believe in transcendent moral truth is one thing. To believe that one has perfectly described it is a different thing. When human beings describe a truth, they do so in the language and traditions of their own human communities. When they do that, they are not describing the truth; rather, they are describing their beliefs about the truth. These two things are not the same. Once human beings take on the human task of describing whatever truth they may have discovered, they color that truth with human finitude. All human knowledge, even knowledge about things that might be true, is affected by our human

context, the inadequacy of human language, and, in theological terms, our sin. The important thing to recognize, as Stout puts it, "is that doubts about explanations or criteria of moral truth are not necessarily doubts about moral truth."[20] Stout's excellent discussion is not offered as a Christian perspective on postmodernism. His is a secular, rather than theological, piety.[21] But it seems to me that his reflections are important to our discussion.

In her response to Browning, Rebecca Chopp, sounding a bit like Stout, suggests that theologians need to move beyond thinking there is either "a common rationality or . . . that such a rationality is an illusion." She highlights the importance of critical theories "attentive to the social construction of power, interests, and knowledge." Differences in ways of knowing simply can't be reduced to a question of "hermeneutics." Feminist theology offers yet another alternative, one that is more "ethical rather than merely . . . cognitive or linguistic." Chopp suggests that we must "listen to others; other religions, other ways of knowing, other persons." Her emphasis is on justice.

Preston Williams struck a similar note in his response to Browning. "African-Americans," he wrote, "have always sought to acknowledge the sacredness and humanity of all persons, and their scholars believe that this goal should define the nature and criteria of theological scholarship." Hermeneutical theory is useless unless it also helps to correct "invalid convictions about race and patriarchy." It must also "embrace the goal of justice for all."

Jung Young Lee emphasized yet another aspect of America's cultural shift since the 1950s. Browning, in Lee's judgment, overlooked just how seriously multiculturalism has become "one of the most crucial issues shaping today's theological education." There has been a significant influx of international scholars and students in North American theological education since the Niebuhr study. Browning's hermeneutical theory is too much the "product of European intellectual developments" to work well for Christians from other cultures. If theological education is to become truly multicultural and global in orientation, it must be willing to be transformed by meaningful dialogue between very different cultural and methodological perspectives.[22]

Related to Lee's argument, but different from it, is yet another major change in American culture since the 1950s. At that time, appreciation for religious pluralism did not extend much beyond Catholicism and Judaism.[23] Diana Eck has provided a picture of how religious pluralism has changed the American religious landscape since the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act in 1965.[24] Los Angeles is now the most diverse and complex Buddhist city in the world, with well over 200 Buddhist temples. In Houston, there are nearly two dozen mosques and about as many Hindu temples. Today, in America, there are more Muslims than Episcopalians or members of the Presbyterian Church (USA). There are nearly as many Muslims as Jews. There are more than 1.3 million Hindus and perhaps more Buddhists, if one counts the first generation of Buddhists born in America. Theological education must continue to adjust to these new realities.

Good theological work has been accomplished by scholars associated with ATS in the last couple of decades concerned with understanding theologically the meaning of cross-cultural accountability and responsibility. This includes how a school's curriculum and culture provides educational experiences that help faculty and students address theologically basic issues of justice, economy, ecumenism, interfaith dialogue and the conscientious formulation of a pluralistic and Christian theology of religions, cross-cultural dialogue, and liberation in terms of gender, race, and class.[25]

Additionally, throughout the 1980s, ATS sponsored a Basic Issues Research Project that attempted to explore many of the crucial questions facing theological education at the time. This body of work has discredited, for example, both the long-held belief that curriculum moves mono-directionally from theory (classical disciplines) to practice and the unhealthy commitment to guild loyalty (separated disciplines) at the expense of overarching aims of the curriculum. Achieving integration in the curriculum is much more important. It has also urged a shift from education built around the tasks of parish ministry or the ability to explain the theology of the church tradition to emphasizing spiritual and theological formation, the essence behind activities rather than proper ability to perform the activities themselves. These studies have further exposed the shaping power of a school's "hidden curriculum"—the assumptions and values present in the culture and activities of the seminary's life.[26] The new ATS Standards depended upon many of these developing understandings of theological education.

An increasing public interest in religious and spiritual issues has emerged in the past couple of decades. Seminaries traditionally, as shown by a recent Auburn Theological Seminary study, have ignored the public and, as a result, are largely unrecognized and easily ignored within their communities. Theological education has left the education of the public on matters religious or spiritual to persons like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell or to Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. Theological scholarship must have something to say that takes advantage of this increasing public interest in religion. In short, scholars associated with seminaries must learn to express their research and scholarship in ways that gain them hearings as public intellectuals or theologians.[27]

I want to use the remaining space to do two things: first, I want to list four assumptions that, in my judgment, should be recognized if we are going to "craft" theological scholarship in ways that will "contribute to theological education." Second, I will mention briefly what these assumptions mean in terms of adjustments theological scholars and schools should make in three areas: the personal, the theoretical, and the institutional.

Assumptions in light of our changing context

1. The first assumption is simple on one level and more complex on another. Theological scholarship must be aware of the context within which it

operates. It cannot afford to ignore the radical changes since the Niebuhr study if it is to benefit theological education. This is a simple assertion.

It becomes complex, however, when one recognizes that the context, if taken simply on its face, might lead one to draw the wrong kinds of conclusions. The last fifty years, for example, have taught us that the distance between the academy and the church is increasing. This might lead one to conclude that the choice is a simple Either/Or— scholarship must serve either the academy or the church. But it is not that simple. Further, our postmodern context might lead one to conclude that either there is a common and universal rationality that all share, or that rationality, indeed all truth itself, is relative only to the community that defines and proclaims it. But this is too simple as well. The choices presented by our changing context are much more complex than represented by Either/Or dichotomies.

2. Given the realities associated with a postmodern context, scholars should remember that all scholarship emerges from embodied individuals. John Cobb argued fifteen years ago that scholars produce their best work when they are encouraged to work from their own existential questions.[28] The approach of religious studies favors historical and analytical studies about figures or movements but often discourages allowing scholars to follow their own religious motivations in scholarship. Theological scholarship should encourage scholars to do so. Cobb bases his defense of this "existential quest" by noting his assumptions about human thinking.

> I believe that thinking is never divorced from feeling, that it is, indeed a kind of feeling. . . . My point is that the clarifying, sharpening, growth, and transformation of ideas occurs best when there is passion in the inquiry. Some passion can be generated by the enjoyment of the debate, by the pleasure of showing that one is cleverer than the thinker one is criticizing, by the desire to advance an academic discipline, or by eagerness to serve the church. But when one's own life and faith are on the line, the passion is both more intense and better directed to the quest for truth.

Cobb recognizes the distortions and dangers that result if scholarship degenerates into defending preconceived positions. This is where all scholars cannot afford to ignore the kind of critical rigor associated with university norms. More often than not, however, research growing out of existential concern represents, claims Cobb, a "genuine desire to come to clarity on a point that is confused, to decide a question that is genuinely undecided, to test a hunch whose meaning and significance becomes clear only in the process." This is what makes "the inquiry genuinely open-ended as well as passionate."

Cobb also emphasizes the importance of imagination—how it enables the scholar to move beyond "already formed ideas." University norms, he

argues, "encourage functioning with existing paradigms." Existential passion encourages the creation of new ones. Eventually, these new paradigms can, and most often do, contain theories and the development of methodologies that can than be shared with, and used by, other scholars. As in the case of Womanist Studies, for example, new paradigms can become emergent disciplines and fields that deserve consideration in their own right.

3. Our changing context does not mean that everything has changed. Religious studies, despite the claims of some associated with it, has not negated the need for theological scholarship or reduced it to irrelevance. Its essential nature remains the same as it was in the 1950s, or, for that matter, what it was in its very beginnings. It concerns itself with God and the things of God. The Niebuhr study made the point well. Theological scholarship is, before all other things, essentially theological.

This means that theological scholarship does not face the choice of whether to serve the academy or the church. That is the wrong question. If theological scholarship serves the church as its primary objective, it fails its essence, which is theological. The church is not God. Theological education cannot afford to confuse the church with that which the church serves. Such confusion, to return to a point made in the Niebuhr study, confuses proximate realities with ultimate ones.[29]

The Niebuhr study sought a common notion of the mission of theological education. It began "that effort by defining the theological school as the *intellectual center of the Church's life*." The seminary is the place where "faith seeks understanding." The authors recognized there would be detractors from every corner, but they quickly dismissed them. "Though anti-intellectualism within the Church," they wrote, "and anti-ecclesiasticism among intelligentisia outside it will object to the close correlation of intellect and Church, their ill-founded objections need not detain us." The seminary is that location "where the Church exercises its intellectual love of God and neighbor." "Such a movement of the mind toward God and the neighbor-before-God is characteristic of the Church in all its parts," the authors wrote, "but it is the first duty and a central purpose of the theological school."[30]

Thus, good theological scholarship, according to the Niebuhr study, must always relate somehow to "the three aspects of God in relation to man, of men in relation to God, and of men-before-God in relation to each other." This scholarship should always be conducted "in companionship with the 'world' and in communication with secular learning."[31]

In emphasizing this point, the Niebuhr study attempted to focus theological education on a divine point of view that could challenge all human points of view. John Cobb has stressed the same point and has used Black theology, liberation theology, and feminist theology to illustrate it. This kind of theological scholarship has "refused to be bound by either the norms of the university or the express desires of large segments of the

churches." Instead, these scholars have taken their cue from their understanding that oppression is "unacceptable to the God revealed in Jesus Christ." In doing so, their theological scholarship has transformed much of the life of the church and served to benefit theological education by challenging old norms and proposing new ones. Cobb argued that such examples demand that theological scholars take "the agenda into our own hands" in ways that "ignore the disciplinary organization of knowledge as well as the explicit agenda of the churches in order to deal with issues that in many ways undercut both."

I agree with both the Niebuhr study and John Cobb. I would state this need for the divine perspective, as a check on all human perspectives, as essential for the mission of theological education, and hence foundational for theological scholarship. And I would use a brief summary statement of the gospel to define it. Because the gospel can be defined in a variety of ways, I want to be explicit with what I mean by it. I like Clark Williamson's understanding that "the gospel is an ellipse with two foci, the grace and command, gift and claim of God, neither of which may be forgotten." The gospel, therefore, is the promise that God loves every human being and nature and commands that justice be done for each and every human being and for nature. Williamson claims, and I agree, that both foci "are definitively made clear in Jesus Christ."[32] The mission of theological education should serve the gospel.

No doubt, confessional schools, some denominational schools, and, certainly, evangelical and more conservative schools, will want to add their own nuances to this expression of the gospel. But I do believe this kind of expression provides a starting point for agreement about the mission of theological education.

4. My last assumption, therefore, is that theological scholarship should serve the mission of theological education, and it must be public. There is no doubt that the mission of theological education serves the church in important ways. This service can be priestly and it can be prophetic, comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable. Yet, if the mission of theological education is to serve the gospel, then theological scholarship can never limit itself to serving only the church, or only the academy, or only the academy and the church. As the intellectual center of the church's life, it must speak to the world as well. As 3.2.1.3 of the ATS Standards puts it, "Theological scholarship is enhanced by active engagement with the diversity and global extent of those wider publics, and it requires a consciousness of racial, ethnic, gender, and global diversities."[33]

Adjustments related to these assumptions

Personal adjustments

To some degree these assumptions require all scholars teaching in theological seminaries to "re-imagine" themselves as scholars. On the one hand, they should pursue questions that animate them—existential questions pursued with passion and critical acumen; on the other hand, they must do so dialogically, always seeking conversation with others, with those outside their disciplines and, additionally, those outside their own cultural contexts. As Rebecca Chopp has put it, theological scholarship must cultivate values that teach us "not only [to] live with difference, but to be enriched by difference." Along the way, we may "have to give up the quest for absolute clarity and sameness, but we will be enriched by many new witnesses of intellectual truth."[34]

This means theological scholars and theological scholarship cannot operate in a vacuum, if they are to benefit theological education. Isolated scholarship, like the isolated school, will be cocooned in its own truth, unable to connect with others who would challenge both its partiality and its fragmented theological understanding.

Preferably during their graduate school days, in the words of Clark Gilpin, would-be scholars "need to be challenged to state how . . . scholarship explores, tests, and sometimes resists the boundaries of the culture in which it occurs." Further, seminary faculty need to be pressed "to reflect on the wider significance of the intellectual work to which they have devoted themselves." They should not stop with mere description, but must also ask what it all means. They need to be mentored in ways that enable them to emerge as public theologians. Theological scholarship should be of the sort that will help move seminary faculty from the category of "public ineffectuals" to a new status as "public intellectuals."[35]

This approach constitutes, as the Hart study indicates, another difference between religious studies and theological studies. Those who advocate public theology believe that all religions naturally address "questions pertaining to the meaning of human life in its cosmic, social, and cultural setting." Things in the world have "gone wrong . . . , both communally and individually." Religious scholarship describes it. Theological scholarship goes another step and often asks "what does this mean for me, for us?" It is the difference between those who seek "knowledge about religion" and those who believe religion could make a difference in the world.[36]

Theoretical adjustments

Theological scholars must also begin the important work of re-imagining their disciplines. The assumptions stated above take for granted that we can no longer do purely disciplinary scholarly work. Each of us needs to work at "de-centering" ourselves. This is never easy, but we can start by placing the normative disciplinary approaches defined by our own fields into conversation

with the different methodologies represented in emergent fields, those dealing with gender studies, interfaith dialogue, cross-cultural studies, various ethnic approaches to theological studies, and the like. As these emergent fields define new theories and new methodologies, these can and should contribute to the work of our own scholarship and to redefining our respective disciplines. In this way, we can, as Jung Young Lee once put it, "work toward the goal of establishing [a] mosaic of different standards of theological scholarship" that will contribute to a form of theological education that is "truly multicultural and global in orientation."[37]

Obviously, this work also involves interdisciplinary studies. But it must include a broader conception of such work than we often possess. As Roland Barthes put it in 1972,

> Interdisciplinary studies . . . do not merely confront already constituted disciplines (none of which, as a matter of fact, consents to leave off). In order to do interdisciplinary work, it is not enough to take a "subject" (a theme) and to arrange two or three sciences around it. Interdisciplinary study consists in creating a new object, which belongs to no one.[38]

Theological education needs more of this kind of scholarship.

Institutional adjustments

First, seminaries need to structure creative and formal ways to connect the scholarship of faculty to congregations. Included here is the assumption that scholars themselves will often make the practices of congregations a focus of their scholarship.[39] As faculty ask "meanings" kinds of questions and communicate their findings to congregations, they will take steps to benefit both theological education and the church. These communications should not be merely academic in nature. As Lee Keck once expressed it: "What is in short supply is a scholarly effort relentless enough to break through the jargon and specialization to the point where the elemental questions emerge with haunting clarity and power." These questions need to connect "to the ecclesial, social, and political cultures in which they and their audiences work and live."[40] In these efforts, faculty could model for students how important issues can be dealt with critically and well in congregational settings. These opportunities would also increase the possibilities for conversations between pastors and scholars, and laypeople and the seminary faculty, the kind that will help congregations to overcome the anti-intellectualism that is rampant in our culture.

Second, seminaries must be clear about their expectations in the area of theological scholarship and how those expectations relate to tenure and promotion in rank. Are expectations in the seminary based on a religious studies understanding of scholarship, one that emphasizes specialized and dispassionate monographs over more general and publicly accessible books?[41] Or, alternatively, do seminary policies promote books written for the church? Perhaps,

it is time to write clear policies that encourage faculty to ask "meaning" kinds of questions in their scholarship. These policies should not necessarily favor publications written expressly for either the church or the academy but rather stress that faculty should be able to demonstrate that their scholarship is relevant to the mission of theological education, broadly considered.

Third, seminary policies should promote, rather than discourage, interdisciplinary studies and multiauthored works. Given recent theological literature indicating the problems with the strict disciplinary structures and guild loyalties operating in most seminaries, schools should begin to advance policies that encourage integration and interdisciplinary work among their faculty.

Fourth, connected to this understanding, but with a slightly different emphasis, is the idea that schools need intentionally to create faculty conversations surrounding faculty scholarship. Jane Smith made this point clearly in the late 1980s but few schools have heeded it. Seminary faculty, she argued, need "more chance to share . . . ideas in their early draft form, which can be done over lunch, at an evening at the dean's house, or in some other informal but designated context where honest response can be invited." To emphasize her point, she quoted the old Harvard maxim: "If it doesn't make sense to someone in another discipline the chances are it doesn't make sense."[42]

Ronald Thiemann has noted that the diversification of theological faculties throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and beyond, has posed a great challenge to creating community conversation within theological faculties. When diversity (in all meanings of that word) becomes fragmentation—"the creation of separate communities of discourse," each living in its own world and each using "its own standards of judgment"—the coherent educational task of the school is greatly jeopardized and the possibility of engaging in serious conversation with the community outside the school is nearly impossible. Therefore, theological schools must be able to create the kind of "intellectual atmosphere in which there is a completely open and candid exchange of ideas." Sometimes, these exchanges can be "sharp and contentious," even "painful," but it is only through them that the mosaic of a truly global theological education will emerge.[43]

Fifth, seminary faculties need to take mentoring of new colleagues much more seriously than they currently do. Mentoring must be institutionalized. In the process of faculty development, schools must work on enabling faculty both personally and professionally to develop into well-rounded faculty members, including development of the skills to think more broadly in terms of theological education and not just personally. Policies must support the ability of older faculty to mentor newer members of the faculty. Mentoring is important for the retention of promising faculty members and for being able to recruit and keep minority faculty.[44] Quality mentoring must also genuinely welcome greater theological diversity. Schools must demonstrate a willingness to think in fresh ways to create policies and practices that enable the voices of younger faculty (those who make up the emerging diversity) to be expressed and heeded without regard to traditional distinctions between "senior" and "junior" faculty.

Sixth, and finally, perhaps it is time for Lilly Endowment and ATS to partner in yet another rather ambitious approach to theological scholarship. Because increasing numbers of new seminary faculty arrive fresh from doctoral work in religious studies departments, a new approach might address the need created by this situation. Perhaps a new grant could focus on the creation of a new post-doctoral program emphasizing acculturation to both theological scholarship and theological education.[45] This is not the place to define the nature of such a program, but I would imagine that it would contain several features.

It would place up to three post-doctoral scholars representing meaningful diversity and different disciplines in an environment in a theological seminary setting for two years. The primary order of business for these scholars would be to work on their first scholarly project beyond the dissertation. This might include teaching up to one course a semester related to their research, but no more teaching than that. These scholars would collaborate in this work with one another and with more senior colleagues at the seminary in order to understand and to make connections between their scholarly research and the mission of theological education. Each participant would make serious efforts to engage fully what it means to take an interdisciplinary approach to theological scholarship. Finally, post-doctoral scholars, by the end of the two-year program, and aided by seminary planning and mentoring, should explore "the public scope of their research projects," through a meaningful public engagement of some kind.[46]

If such a post-doctoral program were created, the years spent in it should not be counted toward tenure, but rather enable graduates to get a two-year running start, complete with excellent mentoring, toward scholarly production before starting a tenure clock. Further, the program would benefit the great variety of theological faculty if it were funded in three or four different types of theological seminary locations (i.e., Catholic or Orthodox, so-called mainline, evangelical, traditionally confessional schools, university divinity schools, or largely ethnic minority seminaries).

Conclusion

Twenty years ago, Cornel West, one of the more visible public theologians on the scene today, recalled Antonio Gramsci's (1891–1937) important distinction between "organic" and "traditional" intellectuals. Paraphrasing Gramsci, West noted that "organic intellectuals are activistic and engaged" and "linked to prophetic movements and priestly institutions" who "take the life of the mind seriously enough to relate ideas to the everyday life of ordinary folk." But "traditional intellectuals are academic and detached." They "are those who revel in the world of ideas while nesting in comfortable places far removed from the realities of the common life."[47] Theological scholarship, if it is to contribute to theological education, as I hope this paper has demonstrated, must be of the organic, rather than traditional, variety.

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ENDNOTES

1.   H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, and James Gustafson, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry: Reflections on the Aims of Theological Education* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956); and Niebuhr, et. al., *The Advancement of Theological Education* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957).

2.   Niebuhr, et. al., *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry*, 49; see also, their second volume: "Our study shows that to a considerable extent seminaries tend to be service institutions to denominations largely through use of the faculty as preachers and speakers." *The Advancement of Theological Education*, 62.

3.   James T. Laney, "The Identity Crisis in the Seminaries," *Christian Century* (2–9 February, 1977): 95, 105–109.

4.   Niebuhr, et. al., *The Advancement of Theological Education*. For demands on faculty time and types of publications, see 62; for discussion of ingrown faculties, see 69.

5.   The 1964 and 1994 percentages are from figures found in Daniel O. Aleshire, "The ATS Quality and Accreditation Project," *Theological Education* (Spring 1994): 7; the current figures are found in an email communication from William Myers to Mark G. Toulouse, February 25, 2005.

6.   Ray L. Hart, "Religious and Theological Studies in American Higher Education: A Pilot Study," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* LIX/4 (Winter 1991): 715–827; see especially 717.

7.   Ibid., 716.

8.   Quoted in Charlotte Allen, "Is Nothing Sacred? Casting Out the God From Religious Studies," *Lingua Franca* (November 1996): 30–40.

9.   Hart, "Religious and Theological Studies in American Higher Education," quote from participant in the study, found in footnote 34, 741.

10. In response to this reality, some theologians, especially those of the evangelical persuasion, like George Marsden for example, have actively discouraged students who want to attend Chicago, Harvard, or Yale and emphasized the need to build strong evangelical graduate alternatives to these mainline schools. See, Marsden, "The Intellectual Task of a Theological Seminary," *Review and Expositor* 92 (1995). In my opinion, Marsden's response is exaggerated, but then I do not share his particular theological perspective. Certainly, theological education needs to respond in some way that will help younger faculty make the adjustment to theological education when they arrive fresh from graduate departments of religious studies.

11. Hart, "Religious and Theological Studies in American Higher Education," 751.

12. Jaroslav Pelikan, "The Christian As an Intellectual," *The Christian Scholar* (Spring 1962). Pelikan later published a book he titled *The Christian Intellectual* in which he considered the history of the Christian intellectual and how Christian intellectuals have historically, and especially recently, been "on the defensive not only against other intellectuals but also against other Christians." See *The Christian Intellectual* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

13. The classic study by Richard Hofstadter, winner of the 1964 Pulitzer Prize in Non-Fiction, is still a good resource on this topic: Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962). Mark Noll emphasized "the danger of anti-intellectualism" as the "greatest danger besetting American Evangelical Christianity." He was quoting Charles Malik; Mark A. Noll, "The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind," *Christianity Today* (25 October 1993). See also Noll's book, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994).

14. Marsden. See also, John Donatich's first point in "The Future of the Public Intellectual: A Forum," http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20010212&s=forum.

15. Don Browning, "The Nature and Criteria of Theological Scholarship," *Theological Education* 37, no. 1 (1995): 1–11.

16. Ibid.

17. See the following essays, all found in *Theological Education* (Autumn 1995): George P. Schner, "Theological Scholarship as a Form of Church Service," 13–26; Ellen M. Leonard, "Theological Scholarship from the Perspective of a Catholic Woman," 27–30; Peter C. Phan, "Theological Research and Scholarship as a Service to Faith: A Roman Catholic Perspective," 31–42; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Nature and Criteria of Theological Scholarship: An Evangelical Critique and Plan," 57–70; and Don Browning, "A Brief Response," 95–98.

18. Modern ethical theory is currently struggling with understanding the question of rationality itself. How is rational discourse about moral values related to each participant's private perceptions of reality? Are there formal patterns of reasoning one can utilize in attempting to communicate with others? See Alan Gewirth, *Reason and Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). Or, are traditions and worldviews so strong that no rational resolution of differences is really possible, or even advisable? See Alisdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2nd ed., 1984); and Stanley Hauerwas, *Community of Character* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981); and Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World, and Living In Between* (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth Press, 1989).

19. Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics After Babel: The Languages of Morals and Their Discontents* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 22–32, 82–103.

20. Ibid., 23–24.

21. Ibid., 181–182.

22. See the following essays, all found in *Theological Education* (Autumn 1995): Rebecca S. Chopp, "Cultivating Theological Scholarship," 79–94; Preston N. Williams, "An African American Perspective on the Nature and Criteria of Theological Scholarship," 57–70; and Jung Young Lee, "Multicultural and Global Theological Scholarship: An Asian American Perspective," 43–56.

23. See, for example, Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, revised edition, 1960); Martin. E. Marty, *The New Shape of American Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959); and John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960). Each of these books, written in turn by a Jew, Protestant, and Catholic, emphasize three acceptable ways to be both religious and American—Protestant, Catholic, and Jew. Each challenged the legitimacy of a fourth alternative: "American Way of Life Religion" (Herberg), "religion in general" (Marty), and "secularist" (Murray).

24. Diana Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001).

25. Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans, and David A. Roozen, editors, *The Globalization of Theological Education* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993); David Roozen, et. al., *Changing the Way Seminaries Teach Globalization and Theological Education* (Hartford: The Hartford Seminary Center for Religious and Social Research, 1996); and the following issues of *Theological Education* dedicated to this theme: "Fundamental Issues in Globalization," *Theological Education,* Supplement I (Spring 1990); "Patterns of Globalization: Six Studies," *Theological Education* (Spring 1991); "Globalization and the Classical Theological Disciplines," *Theological Education* (Spring 1993); "Globalization: Tracing the Journey, Charting the Course," *Theological Education,* Supplement I (Autumn 1993); "Globalization and the Practical Theological Disciplines," *Theological Education* (Autumn 1993); "Ecumenical Formation: A Theology for a Pluralistic Age: The Case of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey," *Theological Education* Supplement I (Autumn 1997); "Incarnating Globalization in ATS Schools: Issues, Experiences, Understandings, Challenges," *Theological Education* (Spring 1999); see also Judith A. Berling, "A Failure of Leadership? Globalization and the University Divinity School," in James L. Waits, ed., *Theology in the University: A Study of University-Related Divinity Schools* (Lilly Endowment, 1995); and Berling, "Our Words Are Beginning to Make It So: ATS Schools on Cross-Cultural Relationships and Globalization," *Theological Education* (Number 2, 2000): 63–80.

26. See David H. Kelsey and Barbara G. Wheeler, "The ATS Basic Issues Research Project: Thinking about Theological Education," *Theological Education* (1994): 71–80. This article was originally published in a longer version as "Thinking About Theological Education: The Implications of "Issues Research" For Criteria of Faculty Excellence," *Theological Education* (Autumn 1991): 11–26. These and other items are addressed in varying ways in the following literature: *Shifting Boundaries: Contextual Approaches to the Structure of Theological Education* edited by Barbara G. Wheeler and Edward Farley (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991); Charles Monroe Wood, *An Invitation to Theological Study* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994); Charles Monroe Wood, *Vision and Discernment: An Orientation in Theological Study* (Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 1985); Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); Edward Farley, *The Fragility of Knowledge: Theological Education in the Church and the University* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); W. Jackson Carroll, et. al., *Being There: Culture and Formation in Two Theological Schools* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); W. Jackson Carroll and Carol E. Lytch, *What is Good Ministry? Resources to Launch a Good Discussion* (Durham, NC: Duke Divinity School, 2003); David H. Kelsey, *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

27. See W. Clark Gilpin, "The Formation of the Scholar," in L. Gregory Jones and Stephanie Paulsell, *The Scope of Our Art: The Vocation of the Theological Teacher* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 3–16. See, also, for example, Bonnie J. McLemore, Robin W. Lovin, and Richard J. Wood, "The Public Character of the University-Related Divinity School," *Theological Education* (Spring 2000): 49–61.

28. All references to Cobb that follow are taken from John Cobb, "Research for a Theological Faculty," *Theological Education*, (Spring 1990): 86–105.

29. Niebuhr, et.al., *The Purpose of the Church*, see 41*ff.* Kelsey makes the theological argument as well: see David H. Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological About a Theological School* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992).

30. See Niebuhr, et.al., *The Purpose of the Church*, 107–112. For a discussion of how the theological school is the place where "faith seeks understanding," see 125.

31. Ibid., 123–125.

32.   This definition is adopted from one offered by Clark M. Williamson. See *Way of Blessing, Way of Life* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999), 81–82.

33.   The Association of Theological Schools, "General Institutional Standards," section 3.2.1.3, *Bulletin 46, Part 1* (Pittsburgh: ATS, 2004): 52.

34.   Rebecca Chopp, "Cultivating Theological Scholarship," *Theological Education* 32, no. 1 (Autumn 1995): 79–94, especially 92.

35.   See W. Clark Gilpin, "The Formation of the Scholar," *The Scope of Our Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 3–16. See also "The Future of the Public Intellectual: A Forum," http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20010212&s=forum. I borrowed the phrase "public ineffectuals" from a comment made by John Donatich in this forum. Other participants in the forum include Russell Jacoby, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Stephen Carter, Herbert Gans, Steven Johnson, and Christopher Hitchens. See also, Alan Lightman, "The Role of the Public Intellectual," found on the "MIT Communications Forum," http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/papers/lightman.html.

36.   Ray L. Hart, "Religious and Theological Studies in American Higher Education: A Pilot Study," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59, (1991): 734–735.

37.   This point is made by Jung Young Lee, "Multicultural and Global Theological Scholarship: An Asian-American Perspective," *Theological Education* 32, no. 1 (Autumn 1995): 43–55; see 46.

38.   Barthes, quoted in J. Clifford and G. Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 1.

39.   When Joseph Hough reviewed the work of both Edward Farley and David Kelsey in order to answer the question "What is theological about theological education?", he stressed the way both emphasized how the work of scholars in theological schools connect to the practices of congregations: ". . . the aim of theological education is not simply to gain information about what is going on in these congregations, it is to develop the capacity to make judgments about the truth or falsity of understandings that undergird the practices of congregations as well as to assess the adequacy or inadequacy of judgments about practices that are chosen to embody these understandings." See Hough, "Introduction: Who Shall Teach in a Theological School?" *Theological Education* 28, no. 1 (Autumn 1991): 6–10.

40.   This is the language of the report of the "ATS Luce Consultation on Theological Scholarship, May 2003," 5. For Keck, see "Priorities for Theological Education," in *Lexington Theological Quarterly* (January 1975): 4.

41.   An excellent study has recently examined the "strong market forces working against the scholarly monograph." Putting aside for the moment the differences between religious studies and theological studies, what are junior scholars to do if tenure requires this kind of publication precisely when the "specialized scholarly monograph" is "in crisis?" See Mary M. Case, *The Specialized Scholarly Monograph in Crisis: Or, How Can I get Tenure if You Won't Publish My Book?* (Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, 1999), ix + 178 pages.

42.   Jane I. Smith, "Response to 'The Dean's Responsibility for Faculty Research,'" *Theological Education* 24, no. 1, Part II (Vandalia, OH: The Association of Theological Schools, Autumn 1987): 115–119.

43.   Ronald F. Thiemann, "The Scholarly Vocation: Its Future Challenges and Threats," *Theological Education* 24, no. 1, Part II (Vandalia, OH: The Association of Theological Schools, Autumn 1987): 96.

44. See S. M. Clark, M. Corcoran, and D. R. Lewis, "The Case for an Institutional Perspective on Faculty Development," *Journal of Higher Education* (March–April 1986); and on mentoring, see J. E. Blackwell, "Mentoring: An Action Strategy for Increasing Minority Faculty," *Academe: Bulletin of the AAUP* (September/October 1989); Shelly Cunningham, "Who's Mentoring the Mentors? The Discipling Dimension of Faculty Development in Christian Higher Education," *Theological Education* 34, no. 2 (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools, Spring 1998): 31–49.

45. John H. D'Arms recommends something like this for junior faculty entering the world of teaching in the undergraduate liberal arts setting. I think something similar, with some adjustments, would help new faculty achieve acculturation within the setting of theological education. See John H. D'Arms, "Advancing Humanistic Scholarship in the Pre-Tenure Years," in Mary M. Case, *The Specialized Scholarly Monograph in Crisis: Or, How Can I get Tenure if You Won't Publish My Book?* (Washington DC: Association of Research Libraries, 1999). See especially 79.

46. The words are Gilpin's. See W. Clark Gilpin, "The Formation of the Scholar," *The Scope of Our Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

47. See Cornel West, "On Christian Intellectuals," *Christianity and Crisis* 44 (March 19, 1984): 77–78. For the original in English, see Antonio Gramsci, "The Intellectuals," in *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971): 3–23.

Academic Challenges
for "Equipping the [new diverse] Saints
for Ministry"

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ABSTRACT: Contemporary theology students have changed dramatically from those of the past and pose pedagogical challenges for seminary educators who must design and offer remedial and readiness support for this new diverse population. Currently there is no coordinated effort for seminaries to discuss the need for such programs, to share best practices, or to become cognizant of programs offered at other institutions. In the summer of 2002, the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion awarded academic dean Dianne Reistroffer and Kathryn Mapes, from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, a grant to survey ATS member seminaries regarding academic support services in their respective institutions. Approximately 50 percent of ATS members responded to the thirty-three-question survey that examined six key areas: personal information, program information, students, tutors, faculty, and program implications. This article is a summary of the findings and the implications of that survey.

Rationale

Graduate theological education faces many of the same problems found in secular graduate schools: underprepared students, older students who need to "brush up" on their skills, international students still struggling with the conventions of American writing, and students with different learning styles. Seminary students face even more obstacles than students in other higher education programs: frequently seminarians come from backgrounds/educations that did not stress humanities-style critical analysis and writing skills. But more importantly, they often bring predetermined ideas that seminary should be about ministry—not academics. Anecdotally, I have found that most students are particularly sensitive to sharing their writing because it concerns personal issues of faith.

Indeed, studies show that contemporary theology students have changed dramatically and pose unique pedagogical challenges for our seminaries in the twenty-first century. Beth McMurtrie in her article "Teaching Theology Students Who Don't Know Aristotle from Aquinas" in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* asserts that for "whatever the reason, seminary students today are not the bookish Church-raised philosophers of yesteryear."[1] Additionally, the Auburn Theological

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Seminary study, *Is There a Problem: Theological Students and Religious Leadership for the Future,*[2] is an excellent source of empirical data that confirms what we in theological education are experiencing. "Walk down the halls of any seminary and ask the professors about their frustrations, and it's likely that many will have high on the list their perception that students just can't write anymore."[3] While diversity is welcomed, even encouraged, the teaching and learning difficulties presented by an older, often underprepared, and more culturally diverse student body is a new challenge. We can no longer take for granted that students know how to read and write critically, have in-depth knowledge of the Bible or various religions, have the grammatical skills to express themselves in writing, or have set determined theologies of their own. Our seminaries are no longer homogeneous "think tanks" formed from "like-minded histories." Many of the educational practices, assumptions, and presuppositions of yesterday are no longer viable.

In order to address these pedagogical concerns at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (LPTS), in 1999, Dean Dianne Reistroffer was awarded a grant from the Luce Foundation to initiate a comprehensive academic support services program. I was hired to design and implement the program. In the fall of 1999, we established an extensive Academic Support Center (ASC) offering help with writing, reading, critical analysis, study skills, and English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL). Additionally, the Center provides academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities and consults with faculty, administrators, and staff regarding disability issues.

Because my educational background and work experience is in rhetoric, ESL/EFL, and adult education, I wanted to learn how other seminaries were addressing these issues. To that end, in the summer of 2002, I was awarded a grant from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion to survey the seminaries in The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in order to examine what types of academic support services are currently available, who these programs serve, and what impact they have on teaching and learning. Additionally, 25 percent of the grant monies were used to visit existing exemplary programs, to have in-depth discussions with staff, and to examine the academic support services that were offered.

Survey of Academic Support Programs in ATS Seminaries

This article is an analysis of the major findings of the survey and school visits, and a reflection of how we, as theological educators, can best work at "equipping the saints for the work of ministry." In order to reach the most suitable contact person, a letter was sent in the fall of 2002 to the academic deans of all ATS member schools explaining the reason for the survey, asking if they were the best contact person, and requesting email addresses. Concomitantly, a control group of eleven seminaries was asked to pretest the survey for clarity, usefulness, and appropri-

ateness. After minor redesign, the thirty-three-question survey was placed on the LPTS Academic Support Center's website: lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/ATS_Survey.htm, and contacts at the seminaries were emailed, asking them to participate in the survey. A hyperlink to the survey was included within the email to make responding simple. Ten percent of the 243 ATS members were sent hard copies of the survey because they did not have email addresses. One hundred seventeen schools replied to the survey—almost half of ATS schools—and 78 percent of the schools who responded to the first contact completed the survey. The survey was divided into six sections: personal information, program information, students, tutors, faculty, and program implications. The complete survey and results are accessible in the archives of The National Writing Centers Research Project (NWCA) at the University of Louisville and online at the Louisville Seminary's Academic Support Center's website: http://lpts.edu/ASC/.

The survey participants are a valid representation of the sampled group of ATS members as verified in three key areas: religious affiliation, geographic area, and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment. The religious affiliations of the survey respondents are illustrative of the ATS membership (mainline 51 percent, Catholic 24 percent, Evangelical 26 percent). Fifteen Canadian graduate theological institutions and 103 U.S. seminaries participated in the survey. That compares similarly to the ratio of the U.S. and Canadian schools in the ATS. The geographic breakdown within the United States of both ATS and the survey participants is within 4 percent of each other in all four regions: North, Midwest, Far West, and South. Similarly, the average FTE of the responders is in close agreement with that of ATS.

The survey showed that most academic service programs come under the purview of the academic dean and are only a small portion of their larger responsibility, reporting that only 10 percent of their job time was spent on academic support services. Although seminaries profess to be concerned about our new pedagogical challenges, the reality that most program directors spend a very small percentage of their time engaged in academic support seems to indicate that schools are either reluctant or unable to make this a priority issue.

Because the majority (51 percent) of responders had educational backgrounds in theology and/or administration and very few (23 percent) were from adult education and/or English, it appears that seminaries may believe that students' academic challenges are not ones of pedagogy but ones of theology. Although theological courses require a high level of critical analysis and writing, a graduate degree in theology does not, necessarily, equip someone to address all of the rhetorical/pedagogical issues required for graduate-level work. Having been trained in these core areas, people with education and/or rhetoric backgrounds are "inextricably linked to an academic discipline—composition."[4] Alexander Golubov, academic dean of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, is an outstanding example of combining rhetorical methods, teaching and learning styles, and theology. Using his English educational background, each

summer Dean Golubov teaches an intensive two-week "Proseminar" for all incoming students that incorporates rhetorical theory and practice, computer skills, and theology basics.[5] Every incoming student has been exposed to valuable and useful theological and rhetorical study and is able to begin his or her career with background knowledge and thus begin seminary on solid footing rather than struggling the entire first and second semesters. It would be encouraging if seminaries would recognize that academic support is a seminary-wide problem and thus a seminary-wide responsibility that requires trained specialists such as Golubov.

The survey indicated that most support programs use three types of tutors: peers (53 percent), faculty (48 percent), and professionals (51 percent). This suggests that schools believe that "anyone" with a theology background can be an effective tutor. If this is going to be a prevalent approach, we must, at the very least, provide training concerning how to work with students' writings. Accomplished academic writers do not necessarily know how to teach someone else to write or to see patterns of rhetorical concerns such as the writing process, organization, flow, voice, audience, proof, critical analysis, and basic grammar. "One of the best ways to help students academically is to provide them faculty that are not only experts in their fields but are also trained educators."[6] Faculty at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary attend a series of workshops including those on teaching and learning styles and educational theory and practice. They established an online Faculty Resource Center in fall 2003, which provides continuing support with articles and book chapters concerning educational theory and practice. New Orleans is supporting its faculty by providing the resources necessary for them to be equipped to work with rhetorical issues in addition to teaching theology.

Another detail to arise from the survey concerned the fact that providing support service programs is not deemed sufficiently critical to devote the necessary funds. More than half of the schools reported that their programs did not have distinct separate spaces where students and administrators could meet: many met in administrators' offices (which often don't seem particularly student friendly). Lucretia Yaghjian in her study, *"Mapping the Rhetorics of Correlation and Liberation"* perceptively asserts that ". . . a routine theological paper was transformed into personal knowledge that challenged them [students] to become what they had written, and to write what they were becoming."[7] Because of this complex relationship between writer and text, compounded by working with such personal issues as expressing faith, schools should provide a "safe" place where students can not only receive help from trained specialists in the fields of reading, writing, ESL/EFL, learning differences, and critical analysis but also feel comfortable and open in this "quasi counseling" situation. "Effective pedagogy is one in which teachers interact with students, in which teachers help writers find their own voices, their own authority to construct texts. Such theory also emphasizes that meaning making is a communal, social activity. In no other place

in the university is there a better opportunity to engage in this kind of interaction than in the writing center."[8] The fact that most support services are parceled out on an "as needed basis" wherever space can be found suggests that academic support programs are, at most, a secondary priority of most administrations and suggests a lack of commitment to providing the resources needed for student success.

The survey also verified that there is a wide variety of opinions about what types of services need to be offered. Schools responded overwhelmingly to providing writing tutoring and more than 50 percent provided help with reading and ESL/EFL. Yaghjian, director of the WRITE Program at Weston Jesuit School of Theology and Episcopal Divinity School, affirms, "Faculty at WJST have commended the WRITE Program for its work with international students, and in particular, with those writing theses."[9] A less obvious, but just as critical, need is assistance for students with learning disabilities. Fewer than half of the schools reported offering services for students with learning disabilities even though federal law (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) mandates such accommodations for any "program or activity accepting federal financial assistance."[10] Several schools maintained that their seminaries didn't "have any students with learning disabilities." This may be more of a case of a "don't ask, don't tell" environment than a lack of students with disabilities. My experience has been that many older students attended school before learning disabilities were properly diagnosed and, thus, are unaware of the availability or the diversity of support services. Other students are often embarrassed or reluctant to approach an administrator about their disability for fear they will be discriminated against or typecast. Writing in the March 2003 *Disability Compliance for Higher Education* journal, Greg Lambeth and Wendy Heller submit that "most students are reluctant to request accommodations, even though they deserve them."[11] Programs for students with learning differences can have a positive impact. First-year LPTS MDiv student Jamie Augustus shares, "ASC is able to give me all the support and then some to help me achieve my goal of graduation. I am able to get accommodations here that put me on the same level as the rest of the students." Seminaries are evading a serious issue and face the possibility of legal difficulties if they continue these policies. More importantly, because we profess to be people of faith, I believe that we have a much greater responsibility than just the "letter of the law" in being proactive, open, and understanding to the needs of the "differently abled."

I visited an excellent support services program for students with learning disabilities at Iliff School of Theology in Denver. Director of Academic Services Joan Van Becelaere has established a comprehensive program for students with learning disabilities. She shares, "There was never a school mandate to create a program *per se*. Rather, as international student advisor and school ADA officer, I simply started requesting a budget for support services and tutors, and the money was granted. Then I started to work on library facilities and technology.

We now have a Kurzweil reader"[12] (converts text into speech). Clearly, Iliff has made the commitment to provide services to differently abled students.

Another major finding of the survey concerned the percentage of students who use academic support services. Very few schools keep a formal account of student contacts but the fifteen schools that do report helping only an average of 24 percent of the student population. This percentage needs to be much higher. The lack of formal contact records implies that these seemingly "unofficial" services are not required to be accountable. To have a successful program, administrators and faculty must be interested and involved. Participants in the survey verified this by citing referrals from faculty and admissions officers as the main reasons that students initially sought help. Scott Gillis, director of the writing center at Claremont School of Theology, concurs, "[Our] success is evident in the students who would not have sought writing help were it not required by the course faculty. These students consistently see dramatic improvement in their grades for written work."[13] At Louisville Seminary, our center repeatedly logs more than 250 contacts with students each year. Because we conduct an individual conference with each incoming student, visit classes, offer workshops throughout the semester, and provide drop-in assistance, our center works with at least 90 percent of all full-time students during a given year. I credit this success to the total engagement of the administration and the faculty who encourage each student to visit the center. Every LPTS syllabus contains information about the Academic Support Center and each of the faculty has referred students to us for help. Since the establishment of the center, only one piece of a seminary-wide initiative to strengthen academic achievement, the GPA average has risen from 3.04 to 3.22,[14] and retention rates among provisionally admitted students has improved from 66 percent in 1998 to 85 percent in 2002.[15] LPTS's director of the Marriage and Family Program, James Hyde, praises the center, "Those students who have taken advantage of the program have improved their writing skills and their grades. One student, who has utilized the Academic Support Center over the past year, has demonstrated a significant increase in her ability to think critically and write clearly. This is a wonderful gift to both the student and the professors." Not only has a culture of academic seriousness been created, but also the level of administrative and faculty support has demonstrated that Louisville Seminary not only wants students, but we also want them to succeed and are willing to provide the services necessary for that to happen.

The last section of the survey, examined general program questions with fill-in-the-blank-type questions. This qualitative method was concerned with feelings, experiences, and impressions answered in the survey participants' own words. A majority of the responses indicate that space and budget are, by far, the most problematic areas. Schools would like to provide these services but because of budget constraints often can't. This schism between wishful thinking and purposeful action is problematic: there will always be "budget problems" at seminaries. Nevertheless, the academic support services that work to strengthen

student and faculty alike are crucial to the success of our schools as our student demographics continue to change and, as such, they should be moved much higher up the budget priority list.

Implications for the future

Repeatedly, during my visits to schools, in survey responses, in telephone conversations, and in email correspondence, administrators have expressed an interest in learning about the services provided at other institutions so that they can use this information to share resources, develop new programs, and enhance the ones that are already in place. The survey was a good beginning to a much needed national conversation among schools of theology. However, this is just a start. In order to keep this conversation going and to involve those who did not respond to the survey, a national organization of academic support service providers needs to be established. This organization could be a centralized resource where information could be shared on a national level and an invaluable resource for the development, implementation, and continuing success of academic support programs in theological education.

A list of discussion questions for considering an Academic Support Center could include:

Incoming evaluations
1. Does your seminary currently test incoming students? Should you?
2. What kinds of tests should you give? Reading? Writing? Bible?
3. When should students be tested? Summer? First day?
4. Should students be required to take a remedial class if their placement tests are low or if their incoming GPAs are low? Will this be a for-credit class?
5. Should seminaries provide programs in study skills, note taking, reading, or time management?

English as a second/foreign language
1. What kinds of summer programs should/could seminaries offer for international students?
2. What sort of ongoing support should/could be offered during the semester?
3. How can we test international students for readiness to study theology?
4. How can the problems with the TOEFL test (high scores, but student has severe difficulties listening and speaking) be addressed?
5. What programs does your seminary currently have for international students?

Writing
1. Should we use faculty/adjuncts as tutors in the writing center?
2. Should students tutor in the writing center?

3. Should there be a mandatory writing class for students who score low on an incoming evaluation or whose incoming GPA is low?
4. Should this course be for credit?
5. What workshops could a writing center offer that would be helpful for students? Should these workshops be compulsory for some?
6. What programs does your seminary currently have for help with writing?

Learning disabilities

1. What accommodations must we provide according to the law?
2. Because we are doing God's work, should we provide accommodations beyond "the letter of the law"?
3. How can we make faculty more cognizant of learning differences?
4. How confidential should psychological tests be?
5. Who pays for testing (often costing $700)?
6. How can we provide accommodations without sacrificing the quality of programs?
7. What programs does your seminary currently have for students with learning disabilities?

Faculty

1. How can we get faculty to "buy into" the idea of an academic support center?
2. How can a center work with faculty's writing challenges (designing tests, syllabi, course assignments)?
3. How can faculty make the necessary accommodations that the Americans with Disabilities Act requires without "watering down" course requirements?
4. Is there anyone at your seminary who works with faculty on rhetorical issues?

Money

1. What are some funding sources for academic support services? In house? Grants? Alums?
2. Should tutors be paid? How? How much?
3. Should the director of the center be part of a faculty/administrator's job?
4. Should the director of the center be full or part time?

These are but thirty-one of many issues that seminaries need to consider before and after they develop an academic support center.

Conclusion

Theological educators' pedagogical stance toward adult education, ESL/ EFL, disability education, and the institution's role in addressing student

academic success lags far behind other undergraduate college and university and graduate level professional programs.[16] The LPTS survey found that while wishful thinking abounds, productive planning and implementation of comprehensive academic support programs range, except in a few notable exceptions, from meager to non-existent in most of the ATS member schools surveyed.

However, this study has provided evidence that a few seminaries do provide quality academic support services for their students. Of course, we have information only from the 117 seminaries that responded to the survey, but I suspect that many other schools are addressing these issues on at least a minimal level. It is also interesting to learn that neither geography, nor size, nor denomination seems to influence how a school responds to this need. Often very large schools offered no greater range of services than schools with small student bodies.

Students must be competent to critically analyze theological texts and then be capable to understand, reflect, accept/reject, apply, and integrate these new ideas to their own theology: "that is, becoming conscious of their particular theological perspective in contrast to other perspectives."[17] They must be proficient, both orally and in writing, to communicate these beliefs—not only in an academic setting but also to a congregation. For some students this is an easy task, but more and more of our seminarians are encountering challenges they cannot overcome alone. It is crucial that seminaries acknowledge the changes in our student population, recognize and respond to their strengths and weaknesses, and design academic support programs that will help them reenter formal education and become competent theologians and pastors. Schools of theology must make this commitment if we want our students to succeed both at the academic level and in the world of work. We no longer have a choice: it is our obligation.

Kathryn Mapes, the director of the Academic Support Center at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, is an adult educator, a trained educator in English as a Second Language, and former professor of English at the University of Louisville.

ENDNOTES

1.   Beth McMurtrie, "Teaching Theology Students Who Don't Know Aristotle from Aquinas," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 7, 2000): A18.

2.   Barbara Wheeler, *Is There a Problem? Theological Students and Religious Leadership for the Future* (New York: Center for the Study of Theological Education, 2001).

3.   Jane McAvoy and Deborah Core, "Writing Discernment in Theological Education," *Teaching Theology and Religion*, 3, issue 1 (Feb. 2000): 47.

4.   Gary Olson and Evelyn Ashton-Jones, "Writing Center Directors: The Search for Professional Status," in *Landmark Essays on Writing Centers,* eds. Christina Murphy and Joe Law (Davis: Hermagoral Press, 1995), 50.

5.   Alexander Golubov (Academic Dean, St. Tikhons Orthodox Theological Seminary) interview with author Feb. 27, 2003.

6.   Perry Hancock (Dean, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary) interview with author March 27, 2003.

7.   Lucretia Yaghjian, "Writing Cultures, Enculturating Writing at Two Theological Schools: Mapping Rhetorics of Correlation and Liberation." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 5, no.1 (July 2002): 138.

8.   Olson and Ashton-Jones, 52.

9**.**   Lucretia Yaghjian (Director of The WRITE Program at Weston Jesuit School of Theology and Episcopal Divinity School) interview with author Feb. 25, 2003.

10.   U.S. Department of Education, "Protecting Students with Disabilities," (Sept. 1998), http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/504faq.html (accessed Sept. 14, 2001).

11.   Greg Lambeth and Wendy Heller, "Learning Disabled Students Often Reluctant to Accept Accommodations," *Disability Compliance for Higher Education* (March 2003): 3.

12.   Joan Van Becelaere (Director of Academic Services, Iliff Theological Seminary) interview with author Feb. 12, 2003.

13.   Scott Gillis (Director of the Writing Center, Claremont Theological Seminary) interview with author Feb. 10, 2003.

14.   *Seminary Fact Book 2004: Profiles of Theological Education at Louisville Seminary* (Louisville: LPTS Press, 2004), 51.

15.   Dianne Reistroffer, *Final Report of the Academic Support Services Program Grant*, written to The Henry Luce Foundation (Louisville: LPTS Press, July 2003).

16.   See note 2 above.

17.   Burton Cooper and John McClure, *Claiming Theology in the Pulpit* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004).

Theological Education and Hybrid Models of Distance Learning

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ABSTRACT: The authors document the rise of so-called hybrid models of distance education and articulate their relevance for theological education in North America. In the first section, the authors lay out a typology of the visions for technology current among theological educators. One feature of this typology is the recognition of two very different ways of thinking about distance education. Early-stage thinking is characterized by a strong dichotomy between online and face-to-face courses. Later-stage thinking has tended toward the development of hybrid programs. The following sections explore the history of the development of hybrid models and how hybrid courses and programs work. In two final sections, the authors ponder the possible strengths of hybrid programs for theological education and the issue of hybrid models and ATS accreditation standards. A close reading of the current ATS standards for distance education reveals that they have been crafted according to models that are both outmoded in terms of their pedagogical sophistication and less than fully relevant to the ways in which distance programs are actually being developed by seminaries in North America.

Introduction

In the last few years, many seminaries have begun to explore online teaching and learning scenarios for use in theological education. For many this has raised serious concerns.[1] For them, the state of the question is whether online teaching and learning can deliver the same level of student outcomes as that which derives from the traditional classroom. While this question gets at a very important issue, we would like to show that this way of framing the question is, in some ways, already passé for three reasons. First, it does not take into account that that particular formulation of the question has received an answer. Second, that form of the question is based on what many would argue is already an outmoded way of thinking about online teaching and learning, namely, the false dichotomy between online and face-to-face models. And, third, it does not take into account the recent developments centering around the concept of hybrid courses and programs—strategies that make use of both online and face-to-face models in an integrated way. Our positive thesis is that a new set of scenarios is becoming possible for seminaries in order to be able to pursue key aspects of their mission. This development could potentially have a significant impact on ATS accreditation standards and procedures.

A typology of technology and theological education and the place of hybrid models

Elsewhere, Delamarter has laid out a three-stage typology describing the attitudes toward and uses of technology for theological education in North America in the fall of 2003.[2] This study was based on eighty-five interviews with representatives of forty-three seminaries whose combined headcount in 2002 was 35,051, or 46 percent of the total enrollment in ATS member schools. In what follows, we will describe briefly the typology, paying special attention to how educators in each of these environments tend to think about distance education.

Stage one thinking: A dichotomy between online and face-to-face

In stage one thinking, theological educators use new technologies to bolster some aspect of the classic model of theological education. The classic model conceives of theological education as (1) full immersion for at least three years in a (2) residential program in which senior members of the community instruct, inspire, and form junior members primarily through (3) lecture-based pedagogies and where students learn the art of theological reflection through (4) face-to-face community discourse, (5) library research and (6) writing.[3]

Across North America, technology has been harnessed to assist with many aspects of this vision for theological education. Seminaries have digitized their library catalogues and forged consortial agreements that enable online access to the holdings of a host of libraries in their region. Email networks have made internal and external communication easier. Institutional administrative systems have been rendered more efficient and robust by the installation of administrative management software systems. To strengthen in-class presentations, classrooms have been rendered "smart" by outfitting them to project computer monitors (and all of the Internet and network resources to which they are connected), VHS and DVD players, document cameras, and the like. Recently, many seminaries have begun to use threaded discussions as an extension of in-class discussions. Though not without their problems (like gluts of unwanted emails and pedestrian uses of PowerPoint), these developments have been widely accepted as genuine improvements to the quality of theological education. For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that in this stage, seminary communities usually think about courses and their delivery as part of a rigid dichotomy: online or face-to-face.

Stage two thinking: The discovery of the hybrid course

The vision of stage one institutions for technology does not begin to change significantly until the seminary begins to try its hand with technology for distance education. This inaugurates a second phase. In Delamarter's findings, seminaries go into the experiment thinking that the issues will be technological—specifically, the use of a course management system, like Blackboard or WebCT—only

to discover that the issues are really pedagogical. They begin by trying to do online courses essentially by "translating what we do in the classroom into an online format." So they type their lectures or deliver them in streaming audio or video. Students read, listen, or watch these; read the textbooks; and then write papers that they can submit using the website. Some adventurous faculty members include threaded discussions but complain that these can take a lot of time to administer. Because they have faithfully reproduced the basic elements of the traditional classroom experience (lectures, reading, and paper writing), they think they have done all that can be done. Unfortunately, these experiences are invariably judged substandard by the students. The only conclusion seems to be that the fault must lie with the online medium. At this point, many theological educators, individually, and seminaries, collectively, have turned away from online education, judging it to be an inadequate medium for delivering theological education.

Those who persist are able to move ahead only by going through a rigorous learning curve devoted to pedagogical issues. They report that they have had to adopt different teaching strategies—ones that are based on constructionist learning theory, student-centered learning, student-directed learning, collaborative learning theory, and the like. Having modified their approach to teaching, based on what they learned about learning, these educators claim that both they and their students have been surprised by the depth of community and the vibrancy of learning that take place in the online environment.

Somewhere in stage two, during this process of learning about new pedagogical strategies, many theological educators discover hybrid courses. These are courses that combine online and face-to-face experiences into a new model for teaching and learning. The details vary widely. Some approaches call for the class to meet every other week. Others meet only a couple of times. Still others dedicate only one or two sessions to the online environment. Seminaries by and large have been driven by a desire to serve distant students and to preserve some quality face-to-face time for their courses. Doing so responds well to the concerns of faculty members for whom this is an initial foray into online teaching. Whatever the mechanism that has driven institutions to explore hybrid delivery systems, the results have been surprising: when tested for student satisfaction *and* learning outcomes, hybrid learning experiences outscore both online courses and traditional face-to-face courses! All of a sudden, the dichotomy between online and face-to-face that governs most thinking in the stage one institution begins to break down.

Stage three thinking: Hybrid programs

One of the characteristics of stage three institutions is their ability to think in new categories to design hybrid programs. These programs employ not just a mixture of online and face-to-face *courses* but conceive the *program* in hybrid terms: which program elements would work best in a face-to-face medium and which

would work best in an online format? There is another unanticipated consequence of going through stage two that begins to pay off in stage three environments: faculty members discover they can no longer conduct their face-to-face classes in the way they used to. Their pedagogical discoveries change their face-to-face teaching for good.

The history of the hybrid experience

The typology above purports to represent a snapshot of theological education in the fall of 2003. If it is at all heuristic, one may well ask, "How does the experience of theological educators with technology and distance education relate to that of others in the educational world?" The answer seems to be that we in theological education are reliving the history of distance education as it has been playing out for at least seventy-five years in North America.

Prehistory: The no significant difference debate

For nearly eighty years, studies have been made of the relative effectiveness of distance courses compared to face-to-face courses in North America. Thomas L. Russell's *The No Significant Difference Phenomenon*[4] has compiled an annotated bibliography of "355 research reports, summaries and papers on technology for distance education." In the early days, of course, these technologies were little more than the conveniences of the mail service system. But more recently, they include online courses and electronically mediated training systems.[5] On the other side of the research are fifty-two studies that document a "significant difference" in results between the two media.[6] Most often these studies report results that favor the distance medium. As the name suggests, this body of literature argues that either there is no significant difference between the two media or, where there is difference, the distance medium is most often more effective.

So when it comes to the question of whether online teaching and learning can deliver the same level of student outcomes as those that derive from the traditional classroom, there is seventy-five years of experience and a body of literature that many are saying has already provided a clear answer: distance education can be as effective as classroom instruction.

To be sure, all informed observers talk about the *potential* of distance education and not the *guaranteed outcome*. Everyone agrees that it is every bit as possible to produce a really bad online course as it is to produce a really bad face-to-face course. The medium guarantees neither effectiveness nor ineffectiveness. But consensus has been reached on our theoretical question: there is nothing inherent in distance education technologies that render them incapable of mediating a quality teaching and learning experience. And the experience of theological educators in stage two and stage three environments seems to confirm what others in general education have learned: whether or not any given distance

course reaches that potential for quality depends on a host of factors having more to do with pedagogy than with technology.

Either/or or both/and: The discovery of the hybrid course

Due in part to the research reported above, educators in the last decade have experimented more and more with distance education strategies. But perhaps an even greater impetus has come from the rise of the electronic distance technologies, such as email and course management systems. These have dramatically increased the speed of communication cycles and brought a robustness that provides a much greater array of teaching/learning scenarios for participants.

But no sooner had this development taken place, than faculty members began to use these distance technologies and teaching/learning strategies to augment the face-to-face classroom experience. In doing so, the hybrid course was born. Because the hybrid course often proved more effective than both online and face-to-face, educators began to study the science of hybrid course design and delivery. As we will show below, after a half-dozen years, there is solid literature on what makes for excellence in hybrid courses.

For the purposes of this discussion, then, it is important to recognize that the old dichotomy between online and face-to-face is breaking down. The decision to offer a course exclusively online or exclusively face-to-face is driven much more by issues of tradition and logistics than by pedagogy. The advocates of hybrid education contend that when pedagogy alone is allowed to dictate the issue, the answer will almost always be hybrid—a set of strategic decisions about which course objectives are fulfilled best in the face-to-face environment and which in the online environment.

Beyond the no significant difference debate:
Hybrid programs come of age

Like dominoes tipping, the discovery of the hybrid course has led rather quickly to a new way of thinking about the delivery of programs. Educators are now hard at work trying to understand what makes for quality in hybrid delivery systems, not just for individual courses but for the implementation of an entire program. Carol A. Twigg calls this a move "beyond the no significant difference debate." In her book *Innovations in Online Learning: Moving Beyond No Significant Difference*, Twigg provides case studies of thirteen such programs, representing both state and private universities and colleges; she details the ways in which these distributed, hybrid programs are developing particular strategies for excellence in teaching and learning, student services, etc.[7]

Now, it should be clear that the experience in the general educational world on these matters of technology and pedagogy is as variegated as the world of theological education. Some (if not most) still provide an education that employs basically traditional modalities but with a few technological innovations added. Others, in pursuit of solutions for distance education, have begun to employ

online courses. Many very quickly discover the hybrid course. And a certain percentage of these move rather naturally into the development of hybrid programs.

What makes the hybrid course work?

In what follows we would like to review the findings about excellence in hybrid courses.[8] In doing so, we have a particular goal in view. We would like to take the findings about what makes for excellence in hybrid courses and apply it, by extension, to the question about what might make for excellence in hybrid programs. Our belief—or, at least, our hypothesis—is that some of the things that characterize the former will also characterize the latter.

Strengths of the hybrid course

In a 2000 speech, Graham B. Spanier, president of Pennsylvania State University, called the convergence of online and traditional face-to-face instruction "the single-greatest unrecognized trend in higher education today."[9] Despite the fact that hybrid learning has seemingly passed under the radar for years, an increasing amount of research points to its potential for theological education.[10]

1.   Student performance and satisfaction increase. Pedagogical changes within hybrid courses produce an overall improvement in student learning. Research at the University of Central Florida (UCF) shows that within hybrid courses—what UCF calls "mixed mode" courses—students usually have greater success than within both traditional, face-to-face courses and web-based, online courses; in addition, student satisfaction for hybrid courses is greater than for online courses. The Learning Technology Center at the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee (UWM) reports similar results. A major reason every faculty participant in a hybrid course project would recommend the hybrid model to other teachers was because student performance improved.

2.   Flexibility of time for students is greater. The fact that hybrid learning offers students more flexibility in how they use their time is universally valued. The convenience and freedom of hybrid outweigh any technological hassles, especially for commuter students. Increased time flexibility, though, does not translate into less time spent in coursework—although this can be a common misperception on the part of students.

3.   Colors on the teaching palette multiply. Hybrid learning provides teachers greater flexibility in accomplishing course goals. Certain pedagogical tools unique to either the classroom or online experience are now available to the teacher-facilitator. Simply put, "the hybrid model gives instructors more flexibility with their classes."[11]

4.   Connectivity between students and faculty is enriched. Contrary to common faculty fears that interactions with students will lessen with decreased face-to-face time, research shows that connections between students and faculty

can become deeper in hybrid courses. The online component of those courses helps to engage students in new ways and to foster the building of community, thereby impacting the classroom setting in turn. One teacher who redesigned a large lecture course into a hybrid format was particularly impressed with the improved connectivity he had with students: "I have never felt more acquainted with students enrolled in a large enrollment course than I do teaching this course in a hybrid format."[12]

5. *Interaction between students increases.* Not only do hybrid courses foster student-to-faculty connectivity, but student-to-student engagement grows as well. When faculty gave reasons for their positive assessment of the hybrid model, the increase in "student interactivity" was cited as one of the most important.

Essentials for successful hybrid courses

Transitioning a traditional course into a hybrid that unites distance/distributed learning with the familiarity of the classroom entails re-imagining the course completely. Something new is being created that is more than the sum of its parts. Though there are varied approaches to constructing a hybrid course, the literature on hybrid learning reveals some basic essentials. What follows is not intended to be comprehensive but merely to give a taste of what is required to make a transition to hybrid learning.[13]

1. *The teacher must facilitate learning.* In order to teach effectively in the hybrid environment, it is essential that the teacher see his or her role primarily as a facilitator of the learning environment. It could be argued that this is the prime contribution of online pedagogy to hybrid learning. Practically, when making the transition to hybrid, Sands recommends that teachers "imagine interactivity rather than delivery" and be prepared for a certain "loss of power."[14] In UCF research based on student evaluations, a key factor correlated to an overall rating of "excellent" for the teacher was receiving an excellent in "facilitation of learning." This transition involves a level of sacrifice. Faculty must be willing to invest extra time in both the preparation and delivery of hybrid courses. Almost universally teachers report that hybrid teaching takes more time than traditional, face-to-face teaching—although time demands are spread more evenly. Those who do make this investment tend to believe that the extra time is worthwhile because of a more effective learning environment.

2. *Courses must be redesigned from the ground up.* Because something new is being formed, a teacher must not think in terms of adding online components to a traditional course. Critical to redesign is starting with your course objectives or goals and determining which are best met through a face-to-face and which through a virtual online environment. For example, certain tasks, such as large group discussions, lend themselves to a face-to-face setting, while others, like small group discussions, can best be accomplished online. Redesign also means much greater detail in instructions, breaking down assignments into accomplishable components, and then assigning each piece a part of the grade.

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Giving a significant percentage of the course grade for online components lets students know that those pieces matter. Between face-to-face sessions, courses need routine, clear structure, and consistent patterns.

3. *Online and face-to-face components must be intentionally integrated.* Hybrid course developers at UWM emphasize that this issue is the single most important for successful hybridization: "There is only one effective way to use online technologies in hybrid courses: it is essential to redesign the course to integrate the face-to-face and online learning."[15] The most common mistake when first entering the ranks of hybrid teaching is to allow the online and face-to-face components to function independently of each other, in parallel dimensions. Experienced hybrid teachers have discovered that a greater portion of classroom/face-to-face time must be dedicated to connecting with the online work students have done outside of class.

4. *Socialization must be prioritized.* Research is showing that whatever the delivery system, building a sense of community enhances learning.[16] In hybrid learning, socialization can be given a jump-start through an intentional empha-sis on building community in the initial face-to-face class sessions. This begin-ning can then be nourished through effective online interactions. The unique fortes of the face-to-face and online environments for socialization (e.g., shy people often find their voice in the online milieu while extroverts value the face-to-face sociability of the classroom) can then strengthen the overall community-building enterprise. Design-wise, hybrid courses also seem to function best when there is a face-to-face session to bring "closure" to the course and experience.

5. *Students must be trained and supported.* The Learning Technology Center recommends that the first face-to-face sessions of the course be dedicated to two things: socialization and initiation into technology. Students do not grasp the hybrid concept immediately. They need early instruction on what hybrid is and on pedagogy. For example, because students in hybrid courses will be more active in their learning, they need to be taught the pedagogical value of that activity. Students also need training right away in technology and time manage-ment. Once these skills are learned, technology is not the obstacle some students perceive it will be.

6. *Teachers must be trained and supported.* Redesigning a traditional course into a hybrid takes more time than the initial development of the traditional course. Every successful initiative to bring hybrid courses and learning into institutions has the strong support and backing of administration. Release time, summer contracts, and other considerations are commitments administration can make to support the transition process, as is providing venues in which faculty can learn collegially from each other and where instructional technolo-gists and faculty development specialists are available for consultation.

Possible strengths of a hybrid program

Based on our study of what makes for excellence in a hybrid course, we would like to probe some of the qualities that might characterize hybrid programs. The reader will remember the caveat about not counting potential as guaranteed success. In the same way that hybrid courses succeed only to the extent that they pay attention to good learning and pedagogical theory and give meticulous care to the execution of the course, so also would we expect hybrid programs to succeed by understanding and incorporating best practices into their teaching and learning. *Were they to do so*, we might expect some of the following.

Faculties with increased skills as facilitators of learning

As we have seen, successful teaching of hybrid and online courses necessarily involves a shift in the role of the professor from being exclusively a dispenser of knowledge to also being a facilitator of learning. These skill sets are not mutually exclusive but can be complementary. But faculty members who work only in the live classroom will not necessarily have had to deal with pedagogical and learning theory. Those who work in online and hybrid environments cannot escape it. In programs where a high percentage of the faculty members have undergone this transformation, there may be some additional synergies that result from the sharing of best practices and from the discussion of how to inculcate good pedagogical and learning theory into an entire program, not just into single courses. Program leaders and designers would thereby be empowered to think outside the box in terms of how best to meet overall program goals and objectives, which could include new environments for facilitating spiritual formation, mentoring, etc.

Increased student performance and satisfaction

As we reported above, the single highest correlative of student satisfaction in a course is the faculty member's skill as a facilitator of learning. Participation in a program taught by faculty members who excel in this area will undoubtedly elicit strong student satisfaction. But, of course, student satisfaction should not be confused with measures of actual learning. This is where constructionist learning theory and student-centered learning theory apply. To facilitate learning necessarily involves shifting from what the faculty member is constructing toward what students are constructing. Of course, this transition is not all or nothing, but when a program as a whole facilitates student-centered, constructionist learning, we can expect increased student performance, learning, and retention.

Deeper connections and increased community

Online and hybrid environments facilitate a higher quality of student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction than is characteristic of the traditional

classroom. When face-to-face interaction—with its immediacy and energy—is combined with online interactions—with its depth and democracy—the combination can make for deeper levels of interaction. Where this is structured and sustained not just for a course but across an entire program, we should expect to see more significant connection and community among students and faculty. In particular, it would seem important to prioritize socialization and community building early in the hybrid program as a whole and not simply within each component. Such an emphasis may require giving credit for an initial community retreat or other such endeavor. In addition, a hybrid program would consider how best to bring a sense of closure to the overall experience, perhaps again in some kind of unique face-to-face environment.

Greater access for students to theological education with less debt accumulation

Perhaps the single greatest implication of the hybrid program is that it can render unnecessary the relocation of students from where they currently live. This fact alone alleviates a huge amount of the disruption students and their families experience and enables them to maintain the support structures that are already in place in their lives, including current modes of employment. This is no small consideration in a time when student debt accumulations for theological education have risen to all-time highs. Seminaries may not be able to lower the cost of the education, but when students are allowed to maintain the jobs they have, they may be able to pay for more of the education as they go, rather than relying on loans. And where students are engaged in ministry, with both a history and a future with a particular church, the church may be more motivated to financially support the theological education of the student.

Deeper levels of integration through contextualized learning

As with hybrid courses, a hybrid program should not be conceived merely as two parallel venues, online and face-to-face. Proponents of these programs claim that they are able to give greater attention than traditional programs to integrating the education of the student into the life context of the student (a third venue), precisely because the delivery system leaves the life context undisrupted and at the center. By this we mean that these programs can encourage students to view the situation as a theological education being brought into their lives as opposed to putting their lives on hold while they do a theological education. Where the program is peopled with a higher percentage of this kind of student, it can change the nature of the interactions that characterize the learning environment: from theoretical discussions about possible future scenarios in ministry, to the enrichment of ministry already in progress.

Lest this description of the potential of hybrid programs make them sound like the arrival of the *parousia*, we close this section with a reminder about a few of the "costs" of developing such programs.

As with hybrid courses, hybrid programs have to be redesigned from the ground up. It is a whole new creation—beyond just a collection of online and face-to-face courses. Strategic decisions about program objectives and goals have to be applied directly to the appropriate venues in which they will be addressed. Such a redesign must involve attention to the overall atmosphere of the program, being sure to render a certain level of consistency in the medium and in the community patterns from course to course. Online and face-to-face components and elements of the students' contexts in ministry have to be intentionally integrated, so that they are not experienced as parallel and disconnected.

Students must be given an early initiation into the technology and community patterns necessary to succeed in the program. Time must be dedicated at the start of a hybrid program to an intentional, face-to-face and hands-on induction into the ominous but rewarding world of technology and online learning communities. This calls for the institution to provide for much higher levels of training and support for students than is customary in traditional programs.

Likewise, faculty members have not only to be willing to undergo the transformation of pedagogy necessary to facilitate learning in the hybrid environment, the institution must be prepared to provide for their training and support along the way. This is important at the level of the basic technology but even more so at the level of instructional technology, the interface of appropriate technology and effective pedagogy.[17]

Hybrid programs and ATS Standards

Among other things, the foregoing discussion has several implications for ATS and its accreditation standards and procedures. ATS has developed two documents that govern its thinking and practices related to distance education. The first is "Standard 10: Multiple Locations and Distance Education";[18] the second is, "Procedures Related to Membership and Accreditation," section V, related to the approval of distance programs.[19] A careful reading of these documents reveals the following.

1. Standard 10 employs ambiguous language that makes it somewhat difficult to decode its vision for distance education. Two terms in particular are multivalent. The first is "program," which, in educational parlance, is usually intended in a broader sense as part of the phrase "degree program" but can sometimes be used in a narrow sense as a synonym for "course." The second is the compound term "distance education" which, even when defined, can refer to widely different types of delivery systems. When the terms "distance education" and "program" are combined, with their respective ambiguities, the resultant phrase "distance education program" could theoretically mean either a degree program that makes use of online elements—and thus could encompass hybrid courses and a hybrid program—or it could merely refer very narrowly to an online class. As we will see, there

are one or two places where it seems like the former might have been in view, but when the ambiguity is resolved, it becomes clear that in the accreditation documents the phrase never explicitly means anything more than the latter.

2. When de-coded, it becomes clear that Standard 10 is written from a stage one understanding; that is, it labors under the false dichotomy between online and face-to-face and does not take into consideration issues about hybrid courses or hybrid programs.

Statement 10.3.1 opens with a definition: "Distance education is defined, for the purpose of this standard, as a mode of education in which major components of the program, including course work, occur when students and instructors are not in the same location. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous and usually encompasses the use of a wide range of technologies."[20] When the definition says that "major components of the [degree] program, including course work, occur when students and instructors are not in the same location," it seems to suggest that there might be other things besides course work that could occur at a distance. If one understands "at a distance" to be one of the ways of referring to the online environment, then this might be taken to suggest that these are programs in which the online environment may be employed to address various objectives of the program, perhaps as part of a hybrid approach. Or, the paragraph may simply mean, "in a program that includes some online courses. . . ." As the rest of the paragraphs of the standard unfold, it becomes clear that it is only the latter that is envisioned. In all the other cases where it appears, the term "distance education" is really only a synonym for "online course." And in these cases, the word "program" also functions as a synonym for "course." Following are the other paragraphs of the standard. We have inserted additional words into the text in brackets to make clear what is partially ambiguous.

10.3.3.2 Schools using distance education [online courses] shall be intentional in addressing matters of coherence, educational values, and patterns of interactions among all courses offered within the [degree] program. Institutions shall guard against allowing the accumulation of distance education courses [online courses] to constitute a significant portion of a degree program that lacks coherence, intentionality, and curricular design and shall develop a system that monitors the number of distance education courses [again, online courses] in a student's program of studies.

10.3.3.3 Programs of distance education [sounds like degree program, but what follows shows that what is actually meant is online courses, i.e., "degree programs that include online courses"] shall demonstrate the collaborative nature and research dimensions of theological scholarship that foster critical thinking skills. According to the degree program requirements,

distance education programs [online courses] shall seek to enhance personal and spiritual formation appropriate to the school's mission and ecclesiastical tradition and identity, be sensitive to individual learning styles, and recognize diversity within the community of learners. [Online] Courses shall provide sufficient interaction between teachers and learners and among learners to ensure a community of learning and to promote global awareness and sensitivity to local settings.

10.3.3.4 The development and review of courses [online courses, in this case] shall be a collaborative effort among faculty, librarians, technical support staff, and students, showing sensitivity to ministry settings and the goals of the entire curriculum.[21]

3. This very narrow understanding of distance education to mean a limited number of online courses as part of a degree program is even clearer in ATS Procedures, section V, "Procedures for Approval of Programs Involving Multiple Locations (Extension Sites and Distance Education." In this document, the development of distance programs is simply understood to mean adding ever more online courses. A distance program is explicitly defined as a program that has rendered six or more of its courses to be online courses (subpoint F.3). We reproduce the relevant materials here. Little comment is necessary.

F.1 Distance education courses [online courses] may be taught for one year with notification to the Commission on the annual ATS report form. When a course is offered a second time, Commission approval will be required, based on the design, requirements, and evaluation of the proposed course.

F.2 When an institution has received approval for two distance education courses, it may offer additional courses by notifying the Commission on the annual ATS report form.

F.3 When as many as six of the courses offered in any ATS approved degree may be taken through distance education, this will be considered a comprehensive distance education program, and the institution must petition the Commission for preliminary approval, according to guidelines adopted by the Commission. The petition should provide a proposed time frame including the point at which the first students taking courses in the distance education program will have graduated.

F.4 When the first students have graduated, the school shall undertake a comprehensive evaluation review of the program and shall petition the Commission for ongoing approval of the program.

     F.5 A significant change in the design or amount of distance education courses offered in an approved distance program requires further approval by the Commission.[22]

4. The programs under development by seminaries across North America and which claim the label "distance education" are very different in kind from one another. All of the following models are being developed—there may be others—and all of them claim the title "distance education": (1) programs made up primarily of electronically mediated correspondence courses; (2) programs made up of a set ratio of online courses and face-to-face courses; (3) programs made up of a collection of online courses, face-to-face courses and some hybrid courses; and (4) fully hybrid programs (according to the definitions discussed above). These programs are not just different from one another in terms of their delivery systems; they are fundamentally different pedagogically. The pedagogical issues required to produce a quality correspondence course are very different from those involved in producing a quality online or hybrid course. The former has a lot to do with the effective guidance of independent study, but there is little or no student-to-student contact in the teaching/learning process and no community of learning. Programs that incorporate a limited number of online or hybrid courses will necessitate a higher level of pedagogical intentionality around building and maintaining a learning community. The highest levels of pedagogical intentionality are probably necessary in those programs that attempt to redesign the entire program as a hybrid program.

5. Our purpose is not to advocate one model as the most appropriate for all of theological education. Each institution should be left to determine that question for itself. It does, however, seem important to distinguish between these models and to ask several important questions about them. First, should the same designation be used to describe them all? Should, for instance, a program that is fundamentally a collection of electronically mediated correspondence courses be able to claim the designation "distance education"? Second, should all of these models be held to the same standard? One might argue that the current system has things turned on its head. Because there is no clarity about whether electronically mediated correspondence courses constitute a fully valid approach to building a degree program, accreditation procedures spend a lot of energy working with those programs to develop ways to incorporate student-to-student interaction and the cultivation of a community of enquiry. Would we be better off to call them what they are (the equivalent of independent studies) and let seminaries continue to use them in the ways they have been but not call them a legitimate venue in which to deliver all or most of a distance education program?[23] As it is now, ATS standards require the most of programs that employ models with the lowest level of pedagogical sophistication and require the least of those programs that have chosen models that demand the highest level of pedagogical

sophistication. Proof of this is seen in the fact that an ATS accredited seminary could develop an entire program of hybrid courses, meeting face-to-face only once or twice per course, and technically never be subject to any of the standards or procedures of ATS for distance education. The reason is that these kinds of courses are currently considered to be modified face-to-face courses and not distance education courses.

6. Finally, it seems doubtful that very many of the programs under development by seminaries are being constructed along the lines envisioned by the procedures manual—as a collection of a certain number of face-to-face courses and a certain number of online courses. Because of this, one wonders how helpful the current standards can be for the accreditation work currently being done. Indeed, one wonders if accreditations are not having to be adjudicated on a case-by-case basis, because the written standards do not provide enough guidance to adjudicate the issues actually being faced.

7. As negative as some of this might sound, it is very natural that ATS is where it is right now on the issue of accrediting distance education programs. As a community of educators, we are moving into areas that have not yet been widely understood. And along with everyone else in higher education, we are sorting out the issues as we go along. We have already passed the point of no return, and many are convinced that the best is yet to come. Our own conviction is that our move forward will be helped by clarifying our thinking with regard to hybrid courses and hybrid programs.

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ENDNOTES

1.   See Steve Delamarter, "Theological Educators and Their Concerns about Technology," *Teaching Theology and Religion* (forthcoming). On the level of individual faculty members and their experience with technology, see Delamarter, "Theological Educators, Technology, and the Path Ahead," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 8, no. 1 (January 2005).

2.   Steve Delamarter, "A Typology of the Use of Technology in Theological Education," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 7, no. 3 (2004): 134–140.

3.   Ibid., 135.

4.   Thomas L. Russell, *The No Significant Difference Phenomenon*, 5th ed. (Montgomery: The International Distance Certification Center, 2001).

5.   Summaries of 125 of these studies are available at The International Distance Certification Center, "The 'No Significant Difference Phenomenon' Web Site," http://www.nosignificantdifference.org/nosignificantdifference/.

6.   Summaries of these can be found at The International Distance Certification Center, "The 'Significant Difference Phenomenon' Web Site," http://www.nosignificant difference.org/significantdifference/.

7.   Carol A. Twigg, *Innovations in Online Learning: Moving Beyond No Significant Difference* (Troy, NY: The Pew Learning and Technology Program, 2001), http://www.center.rpi.edu/pewsym/mono4.html.

8.   For the information and one-on-one time given me during a research visit on October 6–8, 2003, I (Dan Brunner) wish to express my thanks to Alan Aycock, Jay Caulfield, Carla Garnham, and Robert Kaleta, the staff of the Learning Technology Center at the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee. The "Hybrid Course Website" of the Learning Technology Center, http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/LTC/hybrid/, is an excellent tool for understanding and developing hybrid courses. For a more in-depth presentation on the definition, strengths, and essentials of hybrid courses, see Dan Brunner, "Exploring 'Hybrid' and its Potential for Christian Higher Education" (currently under review).

9.   Quoted in Jeffrey R. Young, "'Hybrid' Teaching Seeks to End the Divide Between Traditional and Online Instruction," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 48, no. 28 (March 22, 2002), under "Faculty Preferences," http://chronicle.com/free/v48/i28/28a03301.htm.

10.   On what follows, see Charles Dziuban and Patsy Moskal, "The Impact of Online and Mixed-Mode Courses on Faculty, Students, and Universities," Presentation at Educause 2003, Anaheim, California (November 5, 2003), PowerPoint slides 10 and 14, http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~rite/ (accessed June 29, 2004); Alan Aycock, Carla Garnham, and Robert Kaleta, "Lessons Learned from the Hybrid Course Project," *Teaching with Technology Today* 8, no. 6 (March 20, 2002), http://www.uwsa.edu/ttt/articles/garnham2.htm; Carla Garnham and Robert Kaleta, "Introduction to Hybrid Courses," *Teaching with Technology Today* 8, no. 6 (March 20, 2002), http://www.uwsa.edu/ttt/articles/garnham.htm.

11.   Carla Garnham and Robert Kaleta, "Introduction to Hybrid Courses," under "Why offer hybrid courses?" *Teaching with Technology Today* 8, no. 6 (March 20, 2002), http://www.uwsa.edu/ttt/articles/garnham.htm.

12.   John (Jack) Johnson, "Reflections on Teaching a Large Enrollment Course Using a Hybrid Format," *Teaching with Technology Today* 8, no. 6 (March 20, 2002), under "A Reassessment of Accessibility, Effectiveness and Connectivity Issues," http://www.uwsa.edu/ttt/articles/jjohnson.htm.

13.   On what follows, see Peter Sands, "Inside Outside, Upside Downside: Strategies for Connecting Online and Face-to-Face Instruction in Hybrid Courses," *Teaching with Technology Today* 8, no. 6 (March 20, 2002), http://www.uwsa.edu/ttt/articles/sands2.htm; Charles Dziuban and Patsy Moskal, "Impact of Online and Mixed-Mode Courses"; David G. Brown, "Hybrid Courses are Best," *Syllabus: New Dimensions in Education Technology* (August 2001), http://www.wfu.edu/%7Ebrown/Syllabus%20Articles/SylHybrid%20Courses.htm.

14.   Peter Sands, "Inside Outside, Upside Downside"; cf. Rena M. Palloff and Keith Pratt, *Lessons from the Cyberspace Classroom* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 152f.

15.   Alan Aycock, Carla Garnham, and Robert Kaleta, "Lessons Learned from the Hybrid Course Project," under "Lesson #4" *Teaching with Technology Today* 8, no. 6 (March 20, 2002), http://www.uwsa.edu/ttt/articles/garnham2.htm.

16.   Alfred P. Rovai, "Sense of community, perceived cognitive learning and persistence in asynchronous learning networks," *The Internet and Higher Education* 5, no. 4 (2002), 330.

17.   For a study of the institutional dynamics and processes necessary to conduct successful technology strategic planning, see Steve Delamarter, "Strategic Planning for Technology Initiatives in Theological Education" *Teaching Theology and Religion* (forthcoming).

18.   The Association of Theological Schools, "General Institution Standards. Standard 10: Multiple Locations and Distance Education," http://www.ats.edu/accredit/ac10.htm.

19.   The Association of Theological Schools, "Procedures Related to Membership and Accreditation. V. Procedures for Approval of Programs Involving Multiple Locations (Extension Sites) and Distance Education," http://www.ats.edu/download/acc/proced.pdf.

20.   The Association of Theological Schools, "General Institutional Standards," *Bulletin 46, Part 1* (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools, 2004) 86.

21.   Ibid., 87.

22.   The Association of Theological Schools, "Procedures Related to Membership and Accreditation," *Bulletin 46, Part 1* (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools, 2004) 28–29.

23.   Some readers may believe they detect an illogic in our argument. Earlier we argued in favor of the "no significant difference" findings and now we are arguing that a valid degree program should not be comprised entirely of electronically mediated correspondence courses. In fact, we agree with the concerns that have always been associated with the correspondence course as an appropriate venue for an entire ATS degree program. We would argue that it is only with the rise of distance technologies and an understanding of the pedagogical issues necessary for their use that distance education has become capable of cultivating a community of learning with full student-to-student interaction.

(See response regarding Standard 10 on the following page.)

A Response Regarding ATS Standard 10: Multiple Locations and Distance Education

Louis Charles Willard
Secretary of The Commission on Accrediting

Steve Delamarter and Daniel Brunner have provided an important service to all who are engaged in theological education and especially to those who are avid advocates for distance education as well as to those who are its cultured despisers. Somewhere in between are the ATS standards, which seek to articulate a middle way—a way that seeks to preserve what continues to be relevant from the past all the while remaining in conversation with development and creative discernment. When the Association adopted the 1996 standards, the members recognized that the issue of distance education was important and too complex and inchoate, at the time, to be incorporated satisfactorily into the new standards. Four years later, a special task force had crafted what the Association adopted as Standard 10, and the most accurate prediction at the time turned out to be that it would have the shortest shelf life of any of the standards.

    With that background, I offer several observations on "Theological Education and Hybrid Models of Distance Learning," for the most part limiting myself to the section of the essay reflecting on "hybrid programs and ATS standards."

1. Although I was not on the task force that framed Standard 10, I surmise that the "distance education" that it had in mind was pure (i.e., a course or a group of courses where the teacher and the student were not in the same place at the same time). This does not mean that Standard 10 is inimical to hybrid courses, and it does not mean that Standard 10 should not be revised, as it already has been once, to make it more self-evidently accommodating to hybrid courses.

2. Perhaps the article presses the distinction between course and program too hard. My sense is that the intention of the Standard 10 framers was to develop a process whereby the Commission could monitor development in the area of distance education without standing in the way of good progress, and they used course, courses, and program as terms to identify checkpoints.

3. Two developments that Standard 10 did not anticipate were, on the one hand, the emergence of hybrid courses and programs of the type so skillfully described by the article and, on the other hand, the application of educational technology to traditional teaching. At this point, I have nothing beyond anecdotal evidence and the evidence of my own eyes when I am visiting a member school to estimate how these two shifts are playing out among ATS schools.

4. Despite the limitations I just acknowledged, I offer these observations:
    a. There is no approved degree program in any ATS member school that is "made up primarily of electronically mediated correspondence courses."

b.   The Commission has, at this point, given preliminary approval to a few programs that could be described as "made up of a set ratio of online courses and face-to-face courses," with or without hybrid courses. If, however, they began without hybrid elements, it is likely that some would have made the transition by now.

c.   The Commission has under consideration petitions for several programs that would meet the description, "fully hybrid."

5.   At least one problem with many hybrid courses is that they tend to depend, in their face-to-face phase, on one form or another of an intensive. I have likened this to an athlete in training for long distance running. Years of traditional practice has it that the runner in training has to run two hours a day. The "intensive" version argues that the athlete can secure the same results by running five hours a day one week a month; the intensive total is often less than in a traditional setting. Maybe it could work that way in running, but I'd like to see the evidence in running and in education.

6.   And the desire to see the evidence brings me to . . . not a conclusion but to a pause in the conversation. ATS, with the adoption of the 1996 standards has, increasingly, been insisting that schools have an actively implemented assessment program that demonstrates that the goals that it has for its various degree programs are both coherent with the ATS standards for each degree program and that graduates of its programs have achieved those goals. It is reasonable to think that this proof of the pudding approach will provide the most effective means both of improving the pudding and of converting the critics.

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The Association of Theological Schools is a membership organization of schools in the United States and Canada that conduct post-baccalaureate professional and academic degree programs to educate persons for the practice of ministry and advanced study of the theological disciplines. The Association's mission is to promote the improvement and enhancement of theological schools to the benefit of communities of faith and the broader public.

Theological Education, the journal of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, is devoted to the distinctive concerns of graduate theological education in North America. The journal supports the mission of the Association by providing those concerned with theological education—including administrators, faculty, and independent researchers—with scholarly discourse and reports on issues and trends, research findings and resources, and models of critical analysis and effective practices in graduate theological education.

Unsolicited submissions are reviewed by members of the journal's Editorial Board, who then make recommendations regarding their publication. The Editorial Board will not consider articles that are being submitted simultaneously to other publications.

Article Formatting Requirements

1. Recommended length of articles is 5,000 words (approximately 18 double-spaced pages).

2. Follow *Chicago Manual of Style,* 15th edition, using endnotes.

3. Convert footnotes to ENDNOTES, if necessary, using author's given name and then the surname with no intervening comma.

4. The *American Heritage Dictionary* and the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* are the references for preferred spellings.

5. Provide a paragraph ABSTRACT at the beginning of the article in approximately 80 words.

6. Add a short (2–3 sentence) paragraph at the end of the article identifying the author(s), institution or relationship to the project/topic, position held, and/or other information relevant to the experience of the writer(s).

7. Articles should be composed in Microsoft Word and emailed to the managing editor (merrill@ats.edu), followed by a hard copy sent by conventional mail to: Nancy Merrill, Managing Editor, *Theological Education,* The Association of Theological Schools, 10 Summit Park Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1103.