

# COLLOQUY

## Theological educators speak to religion newswriters

**T**heological education was on the agenda of the Religion Newswriters Association's annual meeting in September in Washington, DC. Three representatives of ATS spoke to the group of 150 religion writers and editors: Daniel Aleshire (ATS executive director), Richard Mouw (Fuller Theological Seminary), and Katarina Schuth (St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity of the University of St. Thomas). Their topic was "Challenges to Contemporary Theological Education."

Aleshire provided a brief statistical overview of the 251 member schools of the Association. He then identified several challenges facing theological education.

"Even though seminary tuition is low, at least compared to private higher education, students are graduating with increasing amounts of debt," he said, and noted that student seminary debt has doubled over the past decade. "Too much debt makes it financially impossible for graduates to enter the vocation for which they incurred the debt or to stay in it with a modest economic quality of life."

Noting the demographic predictions that the U.S. population will be approaching nearly 50% racial/ethnic persons in fifty years, he commented, "While racial/ethnic seminarians typically know how to function bi-culturally, white students often do not, and American religion will pay a price if historically white congregations do not enhance their capacity to minister to racial/ethnic members of their congregations and communities."

Older seminary graduates present another challenge, according to Aleshire, because "they have fewer years of potential service and fewer years to gather the post-graduation expertise that many congregations require." Because it costs, on average, more than \$30,000 a year to educate an M.Div. student, a basic ministerial degree can cost close to \$100,000.



(from left) Richard Mouw (Fuller Theological Seminary), Yonat Shimron (Raleigh News and Observer), Katarina Schuth (St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity of the University of St. Thomas), and Daniel Aleshire (ATS) pause for a picture.

"The fewer years of service after the degree raises the cost of the degree per year of service. The student, and ultimately the church, pays," Aleshire said.

He also identified the challenge of assessing the attainment of educational goals that include personal, spiritual, and moral growth: "These goals are crucial in the education of priests and ministers, but it is far more difficult to determine educational achievement in these areas than whether Johnny can read or Susie can do math."

Schuth addressed trends and challenges in Roman Catholic theological education and identified them as the variety of seminary structures and programs, the diversity of students, multicultural trends in Roman Catholic church membership, the sexual abuse scandal and seminary response, and the incorporation of more practical education to prepare effective leaders. Noting that lay students comprise about half of the enrollment in Roman Catholic seminaries, "the most debatable question arising from this pattern of enrollment is," Schuth said, "what type of seminary is most effective in preparing men for priesthood. Is it one that is for seminarians

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## Why have theological schools?

If you listen carefully these days, you will hear more than a few questions about theological schools. Denominational funding for seminaries is decreasing as the number of people credentialed for ministry by alternative processes is increasing. There are more than a few who raise questions about the value of the scholarly work of the faculty or the time and money that theological education requires for students. These concerns invite careful consideration by theological educators and adjustments in the ways that schools do their work. They also invite an affirmation of why these schools are worth the effort and resources they consume and the value of the gifts they provide for the church and its mission.

At this time, in this culture, for the church in North America, I think seminaries are not only needed, they are needed more than ever. When they do their work well, they enrich the life of the church, the fabric of social community, and the well-being of individuals. If all ATS schools were closed this year, I think religious communities would be busy re-opening them because they are central to the mission of religious communities.

Communities of faith need scholarly inquiry that is undertaken as an act of faith. They need this inquiry for a better understanding of faith and for insight into the world, its needs, and how to heal its wounds. The solutions that faith seeks are not easy and will not be derived from a weekend conference or cursory investigation. They require sustained attention over time.

At one time, the church needed communities of scholarship to copy sacred texts, to preserve them, and to pass them on; we don't need that kind of scholarship now. While the Christian community has an ample supply of texts, it seems to know them less well and to be confused about what they mean. We are still Nicodemuses hearing the words of Jesus and wondering what they could possibly mean. We need scholars to guide us—not by casual opinion—but by the rich tradition of ancient people and with a sacred imagination borne of the Spirit. This groaning world needs good

*“When they do their work well, theological schools provide intellectual substance for faith, practical wisdom for the work of religious leaders, and moral guidance for the church’s work in the world.”*



theological scholarship to guide its dealings with the intractable conflicts and prejudices that bad religion engenders. The church needs scholarship to guide it through the tendency to assume that only the practical counts and that personal perceptions are sacred truths. The scholarship the church needs requires intellectual talent, books in libraries, and time to read them. The church needs theological schools that are houses of faithful scholarship.

Communities of faith need leaders who have spent time studying. Not a single task in ministry has become easier as the modern era has given way to the next moment in human history. In a world that abounds in shades of gray, moral guidance is more complex. In a world of media over-stimulation, preaching is a harder task. In a world of sophisticated institutions, even small ones need to be wise. In a world that needs to understand the Gospel’s vision more deeply, pastors need enhanced skills to convey that vision passionately, reasonably, and winsomely. Complex lessons and effective skills require that time be spent in theological studies.

The church needs leaders who have sat with scholars, asked them questions, and been challenged by their answers. It needs leaders who have developed capacities related to the cure of souls and the care of congregational communities. The church needs leaders who have read the solutions that faith has reasoned for old problems and the ability to discern their implications for new problems. It needs leaders who have learned to think with discipline, who have the wisdom that accrues from reflecting theologically on ministerial work, and who know the story of faith intimately. The church needs leaders who have been to school, learned their stuff, and who love the sacred texts they have learned.

Seminaries have important gifts to give to the communities they serve. When they do their work well, theological schools provide intellectual substance for faith, practical wisdom for the work of religious leaders, and moral guidance for the church’s work in the world. I take delight in being related to so valuable an enterprise. How about you? ♦

## Project management team moves forward with findings from ed tech workshop

The project management team (PMT) for the ATS grant on technology and educational practices has been distilling the ideas, insights, questions, and concerns generated at the August 2004 workshop in Chicago. That gathering of people, from almost all seventy-one seminaries receiving Lilly Endowment technology grants, provided an occasion to begin what PMT member Vic Klimoski (St. John's University School of Theology-Seminary) describes as a crucial next step in the educational technology movement.

"There is something about the use of digital technology that captures our imagination first and then our reflection on practice later. Early adopters especially show us what possibilities exist, and there is a lot of experimenting and false starts. Without stifling that energy, it is now opportune to invite people to tell us what they have learned. One of the objectives of this whole project is to bring that learning to all ATS member schools."

One of the specific outcomes of the Chicago workshop is a refined description of a developmental framework for the institutionalization of computer technology as a teaching and learning resource.

"What we have found in our analysis of table conversations and activities at the workshop," Jan Viktora (Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity), PMT member, notes "is that the three-phase framework we used helps organize the state of thinking about technology. 'Getting started, establishing, and sustaining' provide the framework a seminary or school of theology can use to attend to the important questions." Viktora indicated that the framework will be used as a report to participants that also invites their reflection and critique of the framework.

Also on the agenda of the PMT is the development of six future topical workshops on areas that seem of greatest interest to schools and that support good practice.

"I think we feel like Solomon at times," PMT member Jim Rafferty (Minnesota Consortium of Theological Schools) said, "trying to choose among all the possibilities. There is great talent within the ATS network of schools and outside in the wider higher education and business world, though, so that what we offer will be rich in practical content."

The purpose of the workshops is to provide examples of how theory and research intersect with applications. Tentative topics include assessing available software and hardware options, instructional design principles for using technology, demonstration of exemplary uses of technology for teaching, institutional readiness audits, models and resources for system-wide training, perspectives on distributed learning, and lessons from business e-learning.

The PMT is currently developing the first of two issues of the ATS journal, *Theological Education*, on the topic of educational technology.

"We have identified a range of topics that reflect concerns that need thoughtful reflection," Klimoski said. "We are also exploring how we might use four of the articles as the basis for a series of on-line conversations. The topics—technology and pedagogy, theological reflection on what we are doing, the structural impact of technology, and the perennial 'is there a significant difference' question—all lend themselves to engaging conversations." ♦

*The Technology and Educational Practices Task Force met in Pittsburgh October 28 to review results of the August 2004 conference and to plan future events. Some of the members present included (from top): Lucinda Huffaker, Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning; Bill Hook, Vanderbilt University Divinity School; Melody Mazuk, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary; Robin Steinke, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg; and Richard Ascough, Queen's Theological College. (photos courtesy of Steve Delamarter)*



# What are the issues for the future of theological libraries?

*This article is a revised version of a presentation made to the Panel of Advisors of the Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education in New York City, August 2004. Louis Charles Willard was librarian of Harvard Divinity School (1986-1999) and Princeton Theological Seminary (1968-1986) prior to joining the ATS staff.*

**T**here are limits to this inquiry, for theological libraries do not operate in isolation. While there are certain ways in which theological libraries as a whole and even individual theological libraries can take independent action, there are more ways in which the larger bibliographic and technological contexts define and limit possible actions. In this second sense, the larger question is really, what are the issues for the future of libraries?

The overarching characteristic, in my opinion, is a great fog of unknowing. We know that libraries are undergoing a great sea change. They are also changing a lot faster than most librarians are changing. We don't know where this change is taking us, and we don't know when we will get there, and we don't know what we will find when we do get there.

In the school where I last worked as a librarian, the building was needful of renovation or expansion or both even before I arrived. A decade later, we were no closer either to renovation or to expansion. My dean complained on more than one occasion about the difficulty of raising funds for the library building program. This puzzled me because theological school catalogs and brochures everywhere speak of the library as the center and heart of the institution. Why should it be difficult to raise funds for the center? The heart?

My puzzlement led me to the conclusion that the problem was the same fog of unknowing. Givers of big bucks want certainty. For more than a millennium, a donor could be certain of what a library was and that it would continue to be what it was. This was so secure that its accuracy and reliability was never an issue, but that confidence is no more. These days, one can hardly imagine what a library should be or look like or even, in a generation or even a decade, if it will be at all. There are at least three defining areas for library issues: mission, collections, and buildings.

**Mission:** In the olden days—before it was fashionable to speak about mission or vision statements or goals—librarians did have a vision

and goals, but they were unarticulated and, in my opinion, often near-sighted. Libraries were resource-based, and the goal of the librarian was to acquire for on-site use the resources the curriculum required. The measure of a good library was how much: how much money, how many books, how many journal subscriptions, and how many professionals. It was that way for a long time. These were the deciding questions going back to the pre-Gutenberg, medieval libraries and even further, to the great library at Alexandria.

The apparent self-evident nature of the question, however, masked the underlying mission of the library, which is to mediate between its constituency and the information resources that constituency needs. While it may appear that the resource question is no longer primary—and I say 'appears' because the great fog of unknowing means that all we know is that we don't know—reality is forcing us to recognize that we need to apply the underlying mission, mediation between a constituency and the information resources the constituency needs, in this different environment. It is the same underlying mission, however, mediation between a constituency and the information resources the constituency needs.

Change, of course, is never easy, even if it is to recognize what the library really is and to act according to that recognition rather than what we have imagined it to be. The question for the future of theological libraries is how to be a mediator rather than a collector. The question is, to be sure, both a psychological as well as a procedural one.

**Collections:** There are at least two subsections in the general area of collections. One is "what" and the other, "what format." The "what" question was already hard enough when it was merely a matter of determining whether there were sufficient funds to satisfy Professor Smith's curricular needs. The advent of interdisciplinary research and the development of digital resources have completely altered the playing field. In a resource-based frame of reference, the librarian can never satisfy even what Professor Smith knows she needs, much less what Professor Smith doesn't know she needs.

The "what format" question is twofold. The first fold is a preservation issue; the second fold is an access issue. For several millennia, preservation was not an issue for libraries. Cuneiform clay tablets, papyri, scrolls, and paper all held up

pretty well and, except for the cuneiform clay tablets, could even be recycled. Then progress caught up with the bibliographic media with devastating results. Modern buildings heated up and dried out scrolls, papyri, and books; varying temperatures and humidity caused the salts in the cuneiform tablets to crack the surfaces. Business discovers that it is less expensive to produce paper from wood pulp than from cotton fiber and librarians discover, belatedly, that books with this paper become brittle very quickly.

Microform preservation seemed to be the solution except that it, too, has its own preservation issues and, perhaps more seriously, save for the most desperate researcher, everyone disdains the result.

One thing, however, that all of these formats have in common is that they can all be read. Microforms require some sort of magnifying device, but if they can be preserved, they can all be read. Digitization has changed the terms. In the first place, digital media have a much shorter life span; I am speaking of less than a decade for CD-ROMs. In the second place, even if a file can be preserved by successive and timely refreshing, you cannot be confident that you will be able to read it. The government has data from early space shots that it is unable to read. If you have a sermon that you wrote years and several versions of your word processor ago, and you think you won't be ashamed to read today what you thought was so brilliant then, forget it. You will get an "Unknown Format" message.

The second fold is the access issue. In the olden days, when possession was everything, librarians were able to acquire with abandon, confident that what they acquired would be there at least as long as they were. Even books printed on acidic paper did not go brittle ahead of retirement. Texts that the American Theological Library Association put on CD-ROMs for backup, not all that long ago, the staff can no longer retrieve. A university librarian with whom I recently spoke was very pleased that his administration had just funded a subscription to JSTOR, a vast collection of digitized texts of seventeenth and eighteenth century journals. I asked him what made him happy, and his response was that it would enable him to discard many volumes of some of the JSTOR-retrievable journals, freeing up much needed shelf space. I asked what would happen if his administration

were subsequently to remove that funding. Now JSTOR is a non-profit enterprise. What will happen to our digitized backfiles held by for-profit publishers if the profit margin shrinks to unprofitable levels?

*In the olden days, when possession was everything, librarians were able to acquire with abandon, confident that what they acquired would be there at least as long as they were.*

**Buildings:** In the olden days, about which I just spoke, the future of library buildings was to get bigger in order to be able to continue to hold, in an orderly arrangement, all the books and journals the library had acquired. In a resource-based context, some is good and more is better. As it used to be said, "No purchasing agent ever got fired for buying IBM," more shelf space was never a questionable proposal. Just as that time passed for IBM, however, more shelf space is no longer a safe haven. What is a safe haven? It is all literally in concrete. When the contractor at last finishes the building, you discover there are insufficient power outlets. When you have pulled miles of power cable, you discover that you have to pull data lines. When you have pulled miles of data lines, you discover that wireless technology has rendered dataports irrelevant.

**Should these be studied, and if so, how?**

In my opinion and in terms of the three issues—mission, collections, and buildings—the answer to the first question is yes, in order and sequentially. The answer to the second question is, of course, much more difficult. As I suggested at the outset, the shift from a collector to a mediator involves not only an operational change but also, and more fundamental and dramatic, a change in self-understanding. If we persist in interpreting the role of the library and the librarian as resource and developer or worse, keeper, the consequence will be increased marginalization.

What we need, for lack of a more felicitous phrase, is a bibliographic therapy session to explore the question without preconceptions, preconditions, and presumptions, what is a library and who is a librarian? ♦

*Louis Charles Willard  
Director,  
Accreditation and Institutional Evaluation*

# DIAP 'puts it all together' at fall workshop

Nearly thirty development officers gathered for the Development and Institutional Advancement Program (DIAP) fall workshop, *Putting It All Together*, September 13 and 14, at the ATS offices in Pittsburgh.

Following a welcome from the DIAP Steering Committee, an opening prayer, and introductions Monday afternoon, ATS Executive Director Daniel Aleshire started things off with his speech, *Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Grew*.

"I think development work in theological education requires two central characteristics in development officers—the first is a commitment to theological education and a clear sense of why it is important for communities of faith, and the second is skill and knowledge about the technology that effective development requires," he said. Aleshire continued with a discussion of the financial history and current economic situation of theological schools and the resulting demand on development and institutional advancement in ATS schools.



Richard DuBose, vice president for development and seminary relations at Columbia Theological Seminary and featured speaker at the workshop, delivered a presentation entitled "Essential Practices for Development."

beginning to even think about asking for money and cultivating. He asked the group to write their own individual positioning statements for their institutions, being sure to answer who they are, what they do, and how they differentiate their schools from others.

"A strong communications plan for development should consist of marketing, public/constituent relations, image building, branding, advertising, and defining the value of your mission and importance of your institution primarily to external constituents," said DuBose.

He explained that a good system needs to be built in order to enhance fundraising performance and effectiveness by increasing awareness, involvement, donors, and dollars. DuBose further defined a good system as one that develops a cultivation plan for each prospect that includes planning, strategy, and timing to take a prospect from introduction to solicitation, and one that tracks progress so that you can assess effectiveness and measure progress toward goals.

He went on to discuss that development officers should be gathering research on three levels—initial, advanced, and three-year screening— as well as through prospect management and research meetings, but stressed that "the best information you can find is face-to-face."

"If you do nothing else," said DuBose, "follow the four-step model of identification, cultivation, solicitation, and after-gift stewardship. That's about as simple as it gets." ♦



Kim Till, executive director for advancement at Dallas Theological Seminary and chair of the DIAP Steering Committee, introduced DIAP and gave details about the upcoming February 2005 conference in Fort Worth.

Richard DuBose, vice president for development and seminary relations at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, was the featured speaker Tuesday, with his talks entitled *Essential Practices for Development*, *Essential Practices for Communications and Alumni(ae) Relations*, and *Essential Practices for Planning and Organization*.

He began his talks by stressing the importance of a strong communications plan before

## Communicate Your Promise

- ♦ Make a promise your constituents are willing to support.
- ♦ Communicate your promise.
- ♦ Keep your promise. Deliver the goods.
- ♦ Strengthen your promise by measuring your effectiveness as an institution.

# CORE and WIL join forces to host seminar for racial/ethnic women

Lee Butler (Chicago Theological Seminary), immediate past chair of the Committee on Race and Ethnicity (CORE), and Rebecca Parker (Starr King School for the Ministry), immediate past chair of the Women in Leadership (WIL) Advisory Committee, recognized the need to combine their efforts around a common cause. At its October 2003 meeting, the WIL Advisory Committee decided to cancel its regular fall 2004 seminar and join with CORE in co-sponsoring the *Seminar for Racial/Ethnic Women in Theological Education*, which took place October 1-3, 2004, in Pittsburgh.

The seminar provided a venue for racial/ethnic women to engage in constructive dialogue about the challenges and opportunities of working in theological education. Participants were invited to discuss strategies for increasing diversity in their schools as well as the presence of racial/ethnic women in their own institutions, and heard from presenters who developed womanist, *mujerista*, and Asian women's theologies.

Jacquelyn Grant, Fuller E. Calloway Professor of systematic theology at the Interdenominational Theological Center, opened the meeting Friday afternoon with her talk, *An African American Woman's Reflections on a Life in the Profession*, while Kwok Pui Lan, William F. Cole Professor of Christian theology and spirituality at Episcopal Divinity School, delivered a plenary after Friday night's dinner entitled *An Asian Woman's Reflections on a Life in the Profession*.

"As one of the few Asian women teaching theology, I became aware that my holistic pedagogy is not just to honor the diverse needs of my students, but also to resist a Western bias on the study of religion, which tends to focus on texts. In Asian traditions, religion is not a separate domain defined by systems of beliefs and maxims hashed out in texts," Kwok said. She went on to explain that religion is more of a way of life, embodied by music, art, food, festival, and spiritual practices.

"My holistic approach enables students to recover their wonder and curiosity about God



Members of Saturday's panel included (back row, from left) Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz (Drew University Theological School), Kwok Pui Lan (Episcopal Divinity School), Emilie Townes (Union Theological Seminary), Katie Cannon (Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education), Loida Martell-Otero, Joan M. Martin (Episcopal Divinity School); (front row, from left) Jacquelyn Grant (Interdenominational Theological Center), Daisy Machado (Brite Divinity School), Seung Ai Yang (Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity of the University of St. Thomas), and Barbara Mei Leung Lai (Tyndale University College and Seminary).

and allows me to create a learning atmosphere that honors my heritage and changes the classroom into a livable space for me in the American academy," she said.

A panel discussion, moderated by Joan M. Martin (Episcopal Divinity School), was held Saturday morning regarding contributions to womanist theology, Asian/Asian North American women's theology, and *mujerista*/Latina/Hispanic women's theology. Small group discussions followed.

Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, professor of ethics and theology at Drew University, gave the closing plenary, *A Latina's Reflections on a Life in the Profession*, Sunday morning. She incorporated the theme of theology and ethics through the lens of dance and music by describing different Latina dance steps and rhythm instruments and explaining the spiritual meanings behind them.

The new chairs of CORE—Seung Ai Yang (Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity of the University of St. Thomas)—and WIL—J. Dorcas Gordon, (Knox College)—are committed to carrying on these types of collaborative events. WIL is sponsoring a *Seminar for Racial/Ethnic Women and White Women in Theological Education* to be held October 21-23, 2005. ♦



Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, professor of ethics and theology at Drew University, looked at 'theology and ethics through the lens of dance and music' during the closing plenary on Sunday.

# New faculty explore differences of vocation, career

A group of newly appointed faculty gathered October 22-24 in Pittsburgh for a roundtable seminar. Designed for faculty who have completed their first year in an ATS school, this event addressed the unique vocation—both individual and corporate—of theological education.



Steven Kuhl (St. Francis Seminary) and Jennifer Lord (Lancaster Theological Seminary) served as a panel Saturday morning to reflect and answer questions

regarding surviving seminary as assistant professors. Kuhl focused on recognizing the relationship between each faculty member's individual vocation within the seminary's missional collective vocation.

"How do we (as teachers) understand our vocation as teacher vis-a-vis our fellow teachers, our students, and the institutions we serve? How does the institution in which we serve understand our vocation as teacher vis-a-vis our fellow teachers, our students, and itself?" he asked. "Do those understandings fit? Are we round pegs in a round hole or square pegs in a round hole? The personal and the communal, the individual and the institutional, belong together (they are mutually interdependent) when it comes to the question of vocation—and they belong together in a way that is mutually supportive and critical."

Kuhl emphasized that what each participant does is a vocation and not a career, defining vocation as "that call that comes from outside us, which captures our spirit and being, and which then becomes the driving force in our lives, our reason for being." He explained that regarding teaching, he is a "perpetual learner" and engaged in an unfinished process that continually intrigues him.

Lord spoke about how important her relationship with her dean is for the work she wants to accomplish at her institution. She shared that she has come to recognize that her Ph.D. program was all about her while being part of a faculty is something else.

"It's no longer all about me; now it's that collective vocation" she said.

Lord also discussed diversity, explaining that an easy metaphor for diversity is an Amish quilt, but that metaphor "is too neat and seems to be too mathematically correct."

"I know that in reality, there are untidy corners and messy borders that all of us are faced with," she said.

Roundtable discussions took place after the panel, giving participants a chance to discuss survival issues they may be experiencing.

Following the small groups, academic deans David Esterline (McCormick Theological Seminary) and Wendy Fletcher (Vancouver School of Theology) were asked to reflect on what they have learned from working with faculties of theological education.

"You may find that things are a little out of balance these first few years," said Esterline, "but it's your responsibility to talk to your deans. Make sure you understand the process to get the balance that's necessary." He stated faculty members' ultimate goal is to pay attention to their own spiritual health and live together in a world that reflect's God's reign so students might also follow that way of living life.



- David Esterline



- Wendy Fletcher

Fletcher also stated how important it is to take care of the body, mind, spirit, and emotion in order to bring each individual's whole self to the work.

"The work of authenticity is most important, and your work is simply to become more fully you within your institutions," she said.

Fletcher went on to identify tools she's learned to help new faculty become more successful, including *trust* ("that your best will be good enough"), *courage* ("to speak the truth that's within you"), *compassion* ("walking with your own suffering and the share of suffering your colleagues are bearing"), *endurance* ("to make it through the hard times"), and *direct communication* ("go directly to the source and raise your voice").

The last panel, three associate professors, spoke Saturday afternoon about thriving in schools of theological education.

"Inner work and self-knowledge are essential if one is to thrive in theological education," said Carol Lakey Hess (Claremont Theological Seminary), who spoke about the importance of taking care of self.

Rodger Nishioka (Columbia Theological Seminary) touched upon recognizing the cultural aspects within a department.

"Individual faculty need to be 'cultural detectives' in order to understand the several cultures at work in every collective faculty," he said.

Eleanor Stebner (University of Winnipeg Faculty of Theology) explained that faculty must work collectively within their department, but also be true to themselves to be and feel effective.

"Thriving is often not the same as being successful," she added. ♦

# National Hispanic study reviewed at conference

Hispanic and Latino(a) faculty and administrators from ATS member schools congregated October 22-24 in Pittsburgh to hear a report of "The National Study of Latino(a)s in Theological Education: A Summary of Research Findings" conducted by Edwin Hernandez (University of Notre Dame), Milagros Pena (University of Florida), and Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner (Arizona State University).

Justo Gonzalez (retired, Rio Grande Conference of the United Methodist Church) offered some background information to begin the weekend with his plenary, "The History of Hispanic Theological Education," Friday afternoon while Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz (Drew University Theological School) gave a repeat performance of her dynamic "Theology and Ethics through the Lens of Dance and Music," delivered earlier in the month at the *Seminar for Racial/Ethnic Women in Theological Education*.



Saturday began with a worship service led by Sally T. Gomez-Kelley (Oblate School of Theology).

Sally T. Gomez-Kelley led the worship service Saturday morning.

Immediately following, she served as moderator for the weekend's main plenary of discussing the findings and recommendations from the national study.

"In order to examine the challenges and opportunities facing Latino(a)s in theological education, the Center for the Study of Latino Religion (CSLR) at the University of Notre Dame conducted national surveys among Latino(a) seminary students and faculty during the last two years," said Hernandez. "In order to select a representative sample of Latino(a) seminarians, the CSLR, in collabora-

tion with ATS, targeted sixty-seven seminaries which together represented about eighty percent of the total Latino(a) student population," he added.

Pena shared preliminary findings in such areas as the ethnic breakdown of Latino(a) seminary students; average age of master's students in seminary by race/ethnicity; enrollment status of Latino(a)s predicted by non-education debt, gender, and age; the likelihood of transferring; how many feel there is a supportive environment for women predicted by gender; and the likelihood of ordination predicted by gender among others.

"Our research is showing that while Hispanic students are generally happy with their choice in seminary, there are retention issues to consider," said Pena. "While most are happy, a significant number would transfer if they could. We must further explore some of these issues as to why."

Turner offered more of the qualitative research, sharing several direct quotes from the anonymous surveys. Her study focus included the examination of workplace experiences of Latino/Hispanic/Chicano theological faculty members through factors that influence preparation of scholars for faculty positions, understanding of policies and practices effective in recruitment and retention of Latino faculty, support for faculty retention, and challenges to faculty retention.

"Supporting faculty retention, we found that respondents had a love for teaching and students, the ability to teach in Spanish, time to serve religious communities and do research, a valuable and collaborative institutional climate, and that families are comfortable there," said Turner. "On the contrary, challenges to faculty retention included challenging pathways for tenure; tokenism; -isms of

race, class, and religion; lack of institutional diversity; challenges of



(from left) Edwin Hernandez, Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner, and Milagros Pena presented their findings and recommendations based on a national study of Latino(a)s in theological education.

hierarchy; working harder than whites; expectations for denominational service; language issues; incongruence of 'political' ideologies; stereotyping; Eurocentric theology; and the broken pipeline that starts at the Bible institutes," she said.

Hernandez, Pena, and Turner served as the panel for a question and answer session immediately following their presentation, which was followed by time for separate small group discussions on faculty, students, and institutional profiles.

Elizabeth Conde-Fraser (Claremont School of Theology) and Eduardo Fernandez (Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley) led the worship service Sunday morning followed by closing remarks from ATS Executive Director Daniel Aleshire. ♦



Justo Gonzalez delivered a plenary on the history of Hispanic theological education, while Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz spoke about theology and ethics through the lens of dance and music.

## Theological educators speak to religion newswriters

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only or one that enrolls both lay students and seminarians? Opinions are strongly held on both sides."

Ethnic and cultural diversity among students presents other challenges. In 2003-04, non-Anglo students were 34% of the Catholic seminarians, many of whom speak English with difficulty, Schuth said, and their cultural experiences are far removed from the typical American parishioner they will serve.

"The challenge for faculty is to respond adequately to students with such dissimilar backgrounds. To complicate matters, most faculty are American-born with Anglo heritage."

Schuth identified two consequences of the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. The first was the "considerable downward turn—a decrease of 680 in only two years" in the enrollment of seminarians at all levels, reversing modest gains in priestly vocations in years just prior to 2002. The second outcome has resulted in a systematic review by faculty of their programs relating to sexuality and celibacy. While Catholic seminaries have long addressed these topics in their curricula, Schuth said, "the new challenge is to be sure the material is covered in a forthright manner."

The final challenge Schuth identified is to incorporate more practical training for preparing more effective leaders.

"Keep in mind that many students come with minimal religious background," she said. "They need to experience how church ministry actually functions. One way of exposing them to ministry is to place them in parishes and other settings where they gradually take on more responsibility."

Mouw spoke about challenges in evangelical theological education and began by saying that enthusiasm for theological education—particularly with its rigorous training in the classical theological disciplines—does not always come easily for evangelicals.

"A suspicion of seminaries is especially strong among evangelicals. Roman Catholics tend to

take the need for seminary for granted as a necessary means of priestly formation. In most mainline Protestant traditions there is a rich legacy of respect for theological education, but it is different in the evangelical world, where a positive answer to the question 'Are seminaries a force for good?' is not taken for granted," Mouw said. "Those of us in seminaries have to ask—and answer—constantly: Is this a good thing we are doing? What are the rewards of a seminary education?"

Forging new partnerships with churches and parachurches to address felt needs is, in Mouw's view, a growth horizon for evangelical theological schools, as is establishing new programs of lifelong learning.

"We can't do all that is needed in three or four years," Mouw said, speaking of ministerial preparation. "It will be important for us to have people come back from the front lines of ministry to teach us what is happening in the churches that we need to respond to educationally." ♦



You are cordially invited to a reception for administrators, faculty, and friends of ATS member schools during the AAR/SBL annual meeting in San Antonio.

Saturday, November 20, 2004  
9-11 p.m.

Salon del Rey Central  
Hilton Palacio del Rio,  
San Antonio

**ats**

The Association of Theological Schools  
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

# Fort Worth, Texas is destination for DIAP Conference 2005

**D**evelopment and institutional advancement officers of ATS schools will gather for their annual conference in Fort Worth, Texas, from Thursday, February 17 to Saturday, February 19, 2005.

The Steering Committee for the Development and Institutional Advancement Program (DIAP) has designed a program of plenary presentations, workshops, peer education, and professional development within a distinctly theological context. Workshop sessions on a variety of aspects of theological education development will provide enrichment opportunities for new, mid-term, and seasoned institutional advancement professionals.

Keynote addresses will be delivered by Marvin McMickle, professor of homiletics at Ashland Theological Seminary; Laura Mendenhall, president of Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia; Theodore J. Wardlaw, president of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary; and Barbara G. Wheeler, president of Auburn Theological Seminary in New York.

Program and registration materials will be mailed in November; registration deadline is January 15, 2005. Consult the ATS website <[www.ats.edu](http://www.ats.edu)> for more details as they become available. ♦



## Stewardship: For All It's Worth

### DIAP in Fort Worth, Texas



February 17-19, 2005

Radisson Plaza Hotel

Fort Worth

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**THE MISSION**  
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and enhancement of  
theological schools to the  
benefit of communities of  
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## ats EVENTS IN NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

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### **Graduating Student Questionnaire Workshop**

November 5, 2004 • Pittsburgh, PA

This workshop is for schools currently participating in the *Graduating Student Questionnaire* as part of the Student Information Project.

### **Character and Assessment of Learning for Religious Vocation Conference**

November 5-7, 2004 • Pittsburgh, PA

Furthering one of the ATS targeted areas of work, this conference is directed toward the goal of sharpening tools for the assessment of the goals of the M.Div. curriculum for the benefit of all ATS schools. There will also be on-line resources on the ATS website to provide additional information on comprehensive assessment and evaluation.

### **Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology Conference**

November 5-7, 2004 • Pittsburgh, PA

During this annual event, the 2003-2004 Fellows will offer a presentation about their sabbatical projects and about their plans to draw on this research in their teaching. Fellows selected for 2004-2005 will also participate in this event, along with previous Fellows and representatives from the Luce Fellows Advisory Committee, ATS, and the Henry Luce Foundation.

### **Profiles of Ministry Interpretation I Workshop**

November 18-19, 2004 • Pittsburgh, PA

This workshop for Stage I has been developed to deepen the skills of those involved in the interpretation of individual student profiles.

### **Chief Financial Officers Conference**

November 18-20, 2004 • New Orleans, LA

Designed for chief financial officers by chief financial officers, this conference, "So Many Hats, So Few Heads," will feature plenaries on expectations according to *Standard 9, Institutional Resources*, how to work with the development officer, insights from the presidential perspective, workshops, and keynote addresses.

### **ATS Reception at the American Academy of Religion/ Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting**

November 20, 2004 • San Antonio, TX

The ATS reception for administrators, faculty, and friends of ATS member schools will be from 9 to 11 p.m. in the Salon del Rey Central at the Hilton Palacio del Rio, San Antonio.

### **Executive Committee Meeting**

December 2-3, 2004 • Pittsburgh, PA

The Executive Committee of ATS will reconvene for its second yearly meeting to discuss and give continued guidance to the ongoing work of the Association.

### **Presidential Leadership Intensive Week**

December 5-10, 2004 • Santa Fe, NM

How a seminary engages in systemic institutional planning as an effective, holistic, ongoing process will be the overarching theme. Keynote speakers will cover both content and process, while small groups will encourage conversation among peers. Events are planned with spouses in mind.