



# Connecting, learning, and working

Over the years, the evaluations of ATS/COA Biennial Meetings have identified participants' appreciation for opportunities to connect with one another, learn about issues in theological education, and gain information that supports them in their respective jobs. The Association and Commission gather institutional peers because they have the wisdom and provide the support necessary to do this work well. Learning happens over meals and walks outside the hotel as much as it does in workshops and plenary sessions. This Biennial Meeting will also provide the formal opportunities for learning, especially in the Thursday morning and afternoon workshops that will focus on issues many schools are facing.

The evaluations also indicate that few find the organizational business sessions to be the highlight of the meeting. There are those times, however, when the business of the organization becomes the business of the schools, and this year's meeting is such a time. The policy statements of the Association and the procedures and standards of the Commission are adopted by member schools, not by the respective boards that oversee the work of the organizations, and a major focus of this Biennial Meeting will direct attention to these documents.

- The Commission business sessions will consider the recommendations of the Board of Commissioners, based on the work of the Task Force on the Revision of the Standards during 2008–2010, to make some changes to General Institutional Standards 1–9 and the procedures by which the work of the Commission on Accrediting is conducted. The evaluations of the institutional standards across the past decade by schools, directors of self-studies, and evaluation committee members have affirmed the overall usefulness of these standards, and the proposed changes are minimal. They seek to update the standards in some areas, provide additional focus on educational and information technology, and provide additional clarity in several areas. The proposed changes do not alter the overall direction or accrediting force of these standards. Proposed revisions to the procedures would simplify and streamline interactions between member schools and the Commission while conforming to certain new procedures required by the U.S. Department of Education through the newly reauthorized Higher Education Act.
- The Association business sessions will consider the applications of ten institutions for initial Associate Membership in ATS and the recommendation of the ATS Board of Directors to adopt a number of proposed policy guidelines. These recommendations reflect the action of member schools in the 2008 meeting that retired some outdated policy statements and requested the redevelopment of others. Policy Statements, which the board is recommending be renamed as Policy Guidelines, provide guidance to schools regarding a number of institutional issues. They are not requirements like accrediting standards but represent formal peer counsel through the Association.
- In addition to these actions that emerge from the work of the past two years, member schools will begin the important work of the next two years to address the accrediting standards that guide the design and review of educational programs. The final plenary session will be devoted to formulating guidance for the task force and Board of Commissioners as work begins on proposed changes to the standards related to distance and extension education, degree program requirements, and the complex issues of residency and duration for professional and academic degrees in the theological disciplines.

I look forward to seeing you in Montreal; we have some business to do.



**Daniel O. Aleshire**  
ATS Executive Director



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COVER PHOTO: Logo for the 47th ATS/COA Biennial Meeting. © The Association of Theological Schools.

# Previewing the 2010 Biennial Meeting

## The Future has Arrived: Changing Theological Education in a Changed World

As we look forward to the 2010 ATS/COA Biennial Meeting in Montreal, we find ourselves in the midst of a world that in some respects is barely recognizable.

This gathering of the Association and the Commission will convene with the global context still reeling from economic challenges of the past biennium that have reached into every corner of theological education. No school has gone unaffected by the changed economic landscape, and many have had to make rapid and dramatic changes themselves in order to adjust. Workshop sessions at the meeting will provide wisdom, skills, and moral support to schools striving to bring positive outcomes out of necessary change.

Other changes we are seeing have been much longer in the making. The Biennial Meeting will provide an update on the latest research and initiatives related to women in leadership in theological education as well as workshops that respond to shifting patterns of church membership and trends that project major demographic changes related to race and ethnicity as we approach 2040.

And some of the change is of our own making. To improve the workings of the Association and the Commission in service to ATS schools, several documents will be presented for action at this Biennial Meeting. Representatives of member schools will be asked to vote on the following documents developed by special committees and task forces of the membership.

### **Proposed revisions to the Commission on Accrediting Procedures**

The goals of proposed changes to the procedures of accreditation address three areas. The first and most pervasive is to streamline the number and

kind of accrediting interactions between schools and the Board of Commissioners. Second, some changes to the procedures reflect new requirements that the U.S. Department of Education has placed on agencies recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. Third, some changes reflect a response to expectations for increased transparency regarding the accredited status of schools.

### **Proposed revisions to General Institutional Standards 1 through 9**

The proposed revisions to the first nine General Institutional Standards reflect a general consensus among the membership that the existing standards adopted in 1996 have been working effectively. The revisions, therefore, do not represent any shift in fundamental direction or normative focus but rather were conceived to clarify areas of confusion, update language, and accommodate new technological realities.

### **Proposed new policy guidelines**

At the June 2008 Biennial Meeting in Atlanta, the ATS membership voted to retire or replace six outdated policy statements: Professional Ethics for Teachers (1966/72), Ethical Guidelines for Seminaries and Seminary Clusters (1976), Goals and Guidelines for Women in Theological Schools (1976), Institutional Procedures: Faculty Resignations, Leaves, and Retirements (1960), ATS Guidelines for Retrenchment (1976), and Student Financial Aid (1976). The provisions of these retired policies were reviewed by a committee of the ATS Board of Directors, who crafted four new policies for review by the membership. It should be noted that these proposed new documents are intended as *guidelines*, offering advice and counsel to help direct the work of member schools but not carrying the restrictive weight of the Commission Standards of Accreditation. Each one of these new policy guidelines provides a rationale along

Member schools are encouraged to review these proposals in detail at [www.ats.edu](http://www.ats.edu).



# Hewing to Scripture's pattern: A plea for personal theological education

By Paul R. House

The most pressing matter related to distance education facing ATS institutions is on-line courses and degrees. We need to answer some practical and serious questions. Will ATS continue to count online courses as equal to on-campus or extension-based classes? If so, will ATS continue to allow a large percentage of a degree program to be offered online? In the future, will ATS approve the offering of whole degrees delivered online? The answers we give to these questions need to reflect clear theological principles that lead to the best education we can offer.

We need policies that reflect the conviction that, except as a very short bridge to traditional, personal theological education, online education for credit does not *aid*, much less *enrich*, theological education. It dehumanizes it. It takes us too far from a biblical pattern of theological education. It depersonalizes mentor-student relationships, de-emphasizes collegial student life, marginalizes community worship, isolates faculty, and undercuts collegiality between institutions. It will not balance our budgets; it may kill them. Its expansion will create an elite class of institutions able to offer personal education. It must be curtailed unless we have a collective death wish. We must hew to a biblical pattern and do so quickly.

## A biblical pattern for theological education

One need not share my evangelical view of biblical authority to agree that the Bible highlights face-to-face theological education. God sent his son, not just his Word. Moses, Elijah, Huldah, Jesus, Barnabas, Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla mentored future servants of God. They did so face-to-face in community settings. They did so individually and in groups. They ate together. They prayed and worshiped God together. They suffered and shared together. They did use the

medium of writing to advance their mission, but it was always to supplement synchronous education conducted in the same location as the learners. Jesus was able to send twelve disciples and then seventy disciples through such personal means. The early church multiplied disciples and ministers in this fashion.

Granted, we follow this pattern imperfectly even at our best. On campus we offer students tutorials, seminars, lectures, mentoring groups, chapel services, cross-cultural mission opportunities, and community events. We offer respect, support, and love to colleagues. Sometimes we are not sufficiently caring, and sometimes our students and constituent churches use us as credentialing factories.

But at our best we hew toward the personal pattern. We try to do what Jesus did—teach, touch, and model in person. Even in our extension work, we try to have an onsite person teach, a person who can answer questions, model community communication skills, pray with students, and give a human face to an institution perhaps far away. This work is not as personal as we should be on campus in community, but it tries to hew to the personal pattern.

This ancient pattern reflects ministry and human need. Ministers deal with people face-to-face, in community, and in real-time relation-

POINT-COUNT



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# The case for distance learning in theological education: Six strategic benefits of interactive Web-based distance learning

By Meri MacLeod

To fully appreciate the strategic contributions that distance learning can make, one needs to be clear regarding a *learning* paradigm for twenty-first century graduate distance learning and the *interactive* technology necessary to support it. Jerome Bruner's insight on the nature of learning in light of four decades of research is key for quality distance learning:

Educational encounters, to begin with, should result in understanding, not mere performance. Understanding consists in grasping the place of an idea or fact in some more general structure of knowledge . . . . Acquired knowledge is most useful to a learner, moreover, when it is "discovered" through the learner's own cognitive efforts, for it is then related to and used in reference to what one has known before. . . . The teacher, in this version of pedagogy, is a guide to understanding, someone who helps you discover on your own. . . . Making meaning involves situating encounters with the world in their appropriate cultural contexts . . .<sup>1</sup>

Distance learning course design provides strategic opportunities for faculty to explore the distinctions between a learning-centered paradigm and an instructional paradigm. This contribution of distance learning can offer a wealth of insight to any teaching, including residential. When graduate faculty embrace distance education within a learning paradigm, they are more likely

to use active learning approaches that involve collaborative communication and that integrate the context and experience of students. Typically, both online and residential teaching is improved as faculty gain experience in fostering learning.

Early generations of distance learning were rooted in correspondence courses of the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Surprisingly, these models still persist in seminaries today through an individualized instruction format, but these static "captured content" courses should not be confused with contemporary models of distance learning.

Contemporary models of distance or distributed learning offer rich collaborative student learning in a community guided by proactive and engaged faculty who will most often use both online and on-campus components. Fundamental to these contemporary models are (1) a cohesive educational design within courses and degree program, (2) integrated student and faculty interaction rather than impersonal discussion tagged onto a course or virtual individualized instruction, (3) faculty ownership of courses and regular course revisions, (4) faculty leadership and oversight of distance courses and programs, (5) careful selection of interactive Web-based technologies congruent with course and program goals, and (6) appropriate learning outcomes assessment integrated into seminary-wide practices.

## Six strategic benefits of interactive Web-based distance learning

Interactive graduate models of distance learning offer numerous benefits. The most obvious is the increased enrollment from seminarians who are no longer limited geographically. Less understood are the following six strategic benefits:

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ships. The voice of the people's shepherd, the touch of the deaconess's hand, and the presence of God's servants at crisis moments will last when all hard drives are discarded. Traditional personal programs sometimes fail. They often settle for less than their potential. We must strive harder to reach the biblical pattern, not seek a lower common denominator.

### Dehumanized theological education

Certainly the most labor-intensive and expensive forms of online education maintain some elements of human contact, but the most prevalent model dehumanizes education in several ways.

#### 1 *Depersonalizes student-teacher relationships*

The teacher becomes a reference point and a grader. Students do not see teachers respond to other students, deal with colleagues, worship the living God, minister to family, or fail to do these. Students are not accountable to the teacher in these areas either. The course becomes a transfer of information, and the teacher a conduit of credit, not of grace and wisdom.

#### 2 *Undercuts student relationships*

Friendships formed in seminary often endure, sustaining us in terrible trials. To argue that online forms of communication are equal to face-to-face contact and friendships is to misunderstand the soul.

#### 3 *Marginalizes community worship*

Chapel services offer models for ministry. More importantly, they offer opportunities to pray for others, receive the sacraments, and practice the means of grace. They give communities a chance to glorify God together as one and offer times to bring others into the community. Who seriously believes that online, separatist, isolated instances of devotion constitute biblical congregational worship?

#### 4 *Isolates faculty, especially adjuncts*

Online education works faculty long hours. Indeed in many places it treats them as commodities. How can any of us recruit online faculty members by email, hire them for low pay, have them teach multiple sections, offer them few or no benefits, and claim to be a Christian institution? It may be legal, but it is not right. It should not be approved.

#### 5 *Extends unsavory institutional competition to the World Wide Web*

We recruit students as consumers, and we treat sister seminaries as competing stores. We often do it for the money. Sadly, there is insufficient evidence that online courses pay for themselves if the budgetary aid of regular programs is subtracted. Ironically, we may undercut our best programs and friends and not make money.

### Conclusion

Our duty is clear. We must ask how any distance learning course helps us hew to the biblical pattern. We must fight fiercely dehumanizing trends. We must adopt a definition of distance learning that limits such courses to a bare minimum of credits for graduation. We need to stop playing games with words like *residency*. We need a moratorium on accepting online courses for credit. Or we need a different designation for degrees offered by face-to-face means and those offered primarily or completely by distance means, especially online means. We need courage. Nothing less than ATS's integrity and the Commission's viability as an accrediting agency is at stake. ♦

*Paul R. House is associate dean and professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama.*



### **1 Learning-centered course design**

Faculty will gain experience with a learning-centered paradigm as the basis of course design and teaching. Learning-centered teaching also allows faculty to draw from research informed models such as “situated learning”<sup>3</sup> and “communities of practice.”<sup>4</sup>

### **2 Learning-centered student assessment**

Interactive distance learning provides opportunities for faculty to gain experience in a learning-centered outcomes approach to student assessment. Accessible technologies expand the ways students can demonstrate their learning. As faculty develop an understanding of assessing student learning, they will be able to draw upon new models of “authentic” and “educative” assessment practices.<sup>5</sup>

### **3 Faculty preparation for the demands of the digital generation**

When faculty experience interactive technology in their distance learning courses, they are better prepared to meet the increasing demands of the digital generation of students now arriving on residential campuses. These digitally immersed young adults<sup>6</sup> expect schools to give Web-based media and its “participatory culture”<sup>7</sup> a central role in teaching and learning.

### **4 Smoother transitions from academic study to full-time ministry**

The integration of in-depth ministry with theological study over multiple years eases the transition into full-time ministry. Distance learning is suited for a model of vocational formation that is rooted in situated learning research. Most often distance students are established in local communities with a strong network of relationships and are forging their pastoral identity in a real-life ministry with demanding responsibilities. Setting boundaries, applying their studies in difficult and crisis situations, and making decisions with conflicting impact on a broad network of relationships all contribute to significant vocational learning. These seminarians are deeply familiar with what to expect in full-time ministry before ever graduating. These programs might even offer insight regarding new learning designs that may lower the disturbing drop-out rates for pastors within their first five years of ministry.

### **5 Greater student body diversity**

Distance learning offers the opportunity for greater diversity in the student body through increased racial/ethnic and international students, who can study while remaining in their local communities. E-learning with a global student body can be an important benefit in a globally networked world.

### **6 Graduates with greater capacities to lead in twenty-first century ministry**

Learning in collaboration with interactive technologies offers the potential for seminarians to gain new skills and capacities expected of graduates in a twenty-first century world.<sup>8</sup> Solving new kinds of problems in creative and collaborative ways within the world’s highly social and participatory culture is now essential for effectiveness, and the outdated baby boomer model of leading by positional authority (i.e., from the top) is being replaced with a new paradigm of leadership by influence.<sup>9</sup>

Scholars believe that three interrelated shifts in society are underway.<sup>10</sup> First, the knowledge and skills graduates will need in a “flat” knowledge-based economy are different from those needed in previous generations. Second, approaches of research, teaching, and learning are changing as interactive technologies support innovative pedagogies. And third, characteristics of students are changing as their use of technology shapes their learning styles and preferences. Combined, these changes will undoubtedly have a significant impact on future forms of theological education. New models of distance learning can substantially contribute to a seminary’s capacity to engage this new educational future.<sup>11</sup> ♦

See page 33 for endnotes.

*Meri MacLeod is the associate professor of educational leadership and director of the distance learning MDiv at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan. A full-length version of this article can be obtained from the author by contacting her at [meri@digitalseminarian.com](mailto:meri@digitalseminarian.com).*



# Leading schools at a time like this

By Daniel O. Aleshire

## Other times and this time

In colonial America and the first decades after independence, church leaders were shaping culture and intellectual life in North America as much as they were leading religion. Joseph Willard was president of Harvard at the turn of the nineteenth century, having come from the pastorate. His two successors were also clergymen.<sup>1</sup> Samuel Smith was the president of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton, at the turn of the nineteenth century. Also a clergyman, he helped to found what are now Hampden-Sydney College and Washington and Lee University in Virginia before going to Princeton. Smith and James Madison, his classmate at the College of New Jersey, contributed to the development of the doctrine of separation of church and state.<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Moore was the Anglican bishop of New York when he became the president of Columbia College, now Columbia University.<sup>3</sup> Glenn Miller titled his history of theological education during this era *Piety and Intellect* because clergy were often the public intellectuals of this period. Many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were clergy, and the line between civic and religious leadership was thin, if it existed at all. Educating religious leaders was part and parcel of educating national leaders.

*In colonial America and the first decades after independence, church leaders were shaping culture and intellectual life in North America . . .*

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Charles William Eliot, a chemist by training, was president at Harvard, the longest serving president of the university. He introduced many changes, including the elimination of compulsory chapel.<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia from the first to the fourth decades of

the twentieth century, was counselor to several presidents, started Teachers College,<sup>5</sup> was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize,<sup>6</sup> and apparently left an ambiguous legacy regarding his perceptions about totalitarian states and Jews. The University of Chicago was just completing its first decade, and William Rainey Harper, biblical scholar and educational innovator, was president. He imagined Chicago to have an undergraduate division that functioned like an English college and a graduate division that functioned like a German research university, and he wanted a nonsectarian institution, even though it had been founded as a Baptist institution. Harper's fingerprints were on a host of late nineteenth and earlier twentieth century cultural and educational innovations, and in some ways, he reflected the model of clergyman as culture shaper.<sup>7</sup> That number was diminishing, however, and by the early decades of the twentieth century, church leaders were unlikely to be the public intellectuals who influenced the broader culture. They did, however, lead religious institutions that had considerable cultural status. They envisioned the combination of the progressive spirit of the modern era and a culturally muscular Christianity that would make the twentieth century the "Christian Century." While university leadership was turning over to the chemists and political philosophers, religious leaders were guiding a culturally established and privileged religious establishment. Theological schools had matured, and the education of religious leaders was far more sophisticated than it had been at the beginning of the previous century. There was less classical study of Latin and Greek but far more sophisticated study of the Bible, theology, and the beginnings of what we now call pastoral theology. Divinity may have ceased to be viewed as the queen of the sciences, but it was still a respectable peer. Accordingly, Glenn Miller titled his volume on the history of theological education from the Civil War until World War II *Piety and Profession*.

We have just completed the first decade of the twenty-first century, and as best I can tell, religion is at a very different place now than it was at the beginning of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. Both U.S. and Canadian societies are keeping organized and institutional religion at an increasing distance from the center of cultural leadership. Some individual religious leaders, like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, have eclipsed the social distance for a period and influenced culture, but they have done so as individuals more than as representatives of institutional religion. While the U.S. Roman Catholic bishops have demonstrated in the health care debate that institutional Christianity continues to exert social pressure, that power is much diminished from two centuries ago. Organized Christianity enters this century with considerably less confidence than it entered the twentieth century, and its organizational structures, including theological schools, are stressed. The United States, with its 30 percent religious participation, and Canada, with a 15 percent or so religious participation rate, are the most religiously active liberal democracies in the world. Religion, as a presence in the society, has not evaporated, but it has changed and continues to change. While religion as a social system has always been changing, we are less sure of the direction of the change and less confident that the changes will result in better religious presence. Glenn Miller is working on his third volume on the history of theological education, from the 1950s to the twenty-first century, and I talked with him last year about what the title should be. We both had some ideas, but were not sure, because the dominant metaphor for Christianity as it enters this new century is not yet clear. It will include “piety,” but what will the rest of the title be?

### **The work of leadership in this time**

What does it mean to lead these schools at a time like this? I want to make a few comments about leadership at this moment in time.

### ***Now is an absolutely great time to be a leader.***

It would no doubt be pleasant to be a leader when the church had more social status, more confidence, more organizational capacity, more money—but those moments require less leadership. The time in which you have been called into leadership in theological education is more challenging than some other times, but the reach of good leadership is exaggerated in complex times. When problems are more abundant than



*Many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were clergy, and the line between civic and religious leadership was thin, if it existed at all.*

solutions and need outpaces capacity, leadership has the opportunity to make a difference. The directions are not clear, and good leaders have the opportunity to discern promising and faithful directions.

David Tiede, who served as president of Luther Seminary for seventeen years and contributed significantly to the life of ATS and In Trust during that time, joins others in a simple definition of leadership: it is getting an organization from point A to point B. This is an era in which virtually every theological school needs to get from the point where it is to another point. In more settled times, many leaders can spend a career making what Ron Heifetz refers to as “technical changes.” These are the changes that any institution needs from time to time for necessary midcourse corrections as it pursues its mission. Technical changes are often changes in strategy. In times like the current one, many ATS member schools are being called to make what Heifetz calls “adaptive changes.” These are changes of a more fundamental order. They are more likely to set a new course than to correct an existing one. Leadership at this time is as engaging and potentially influential as it is tiring and perplexing. It is the kind of time that is a gift to missional leaders.

*By the early decades of the twentieth century, church leaders were unlikely to be the public intellectuals who influenced the broader culture. They did, however, lead religious institutions that had considerable cultural status.*

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### *Leadership in a time like this requires as much wisdom as it does energy.*

I don't think that wisdom is a gift that many leaders possess on the first day of the job. Wisdom is more likely to be around them in trusted confidants, in institutional memory and mission, and in the counsel of the board. Over time, wisdom can become more internal and personal, but only over time. Wisdom is needed for many reasons. It is necessary to discern what precious part of the past must be carried into the future. Wisdom is needed in order to discern the institutional mission that will best serve the future. It is necessary to help schools that were built to continue doing in the future what they are currently doing to develop new patterns of work and significantly altered missional goals. This time—your time as a theological school leader—does not need good ideas or even bright ideas as much as it needs wise ideas. Wisdom may not be as appreciated as some other characteristics of leaders, and the pressure will always be focused on skills that get money for the school. But you are leading schools in which they teach students that "Happy are those who find wisdom, and those who get understanding, for her income is better than silver, and her revenue better than gold" (Proverbs 3:13–14 NRSV).

### *You have the opportunity to work with institutions.*

Theological schools may be small, but they are institutions, and institutions have a

particularly important role in times of rapid cultural change. Hugh Heclo has written about the importance of "thinking institutionally." Thinking institutionally, for Heclo, differs from thinking about institutions. He writes that "To think about art is not the same thing as having an artistic view of the world. . . . To think about religion is clearly not the same thing as being religious in your approach to daily life. . . ."<sup>8</sup> For Heclo, thinking institutionally involves a "faithful reception"—seeing ourselves as "debtors who owe something, not as creditors to whom something is owed."<sup>9</sup> "To think institutionally is to stretch your time horizon backward and forward so that the shadows from both past and future lengthen into the present."<sup>10</sup>

Theological schools are born out of religious vision and are the recipients of a legacy of value and meaning. They educate religious leaders, to be sure, but the soul of a theological school is not its curriculum or educational strategy. The soul—the real *institution* of a theological school—is the religious vision it inherits, embodies, and perpetuates. A religious vision cannot survive disembodied from institutional forms that make it possible "to stretch the time horizon backward and forward so that the shadows from both past and future lengthen into the present." A religious vision cannot provide a "socially ordered grounding(s) for human life," in Heclo's terms, absent an institutional home. A religious vision needs some place where people are up in the middle of the night thinking about where the

shadow from the past overlaps with the shadow from the future. The Christian vision enters this century with fewer institutional homes than it has had in the past—fewer colleges and social service agencies, weaker denominational structures—and it needs the institutional home that theological schools can provide. Working for long-term institutional capacity is a good way to spend the energy and worry that your jobs will require.

### The value of institutions

My best friend in seminary, Tom Graves, was the founding president of Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond. It was founded as a result of the Southern Baptist battles of the 1980s in an effort to extend the vision of Baptist life and theological education that previously had characterized two of the denomination's seminaries. I was invited to speak for the seminary's fifteenth anniversary several years ago.

When Tom and I were first-year students in seminary, he started an underground newspaper, complete with an off-campus mailbox. I was a writer and contributor. Because this was an underground paper, there were no bylines or identification of editors. I can assure that *Diakonia* did exist, if for only a short time. My article in the inaugural issue savaged the seminary's grading system, and other articles exposed numerous perceived institutional failures. It was 1969, and we had arrived at the seminary with considerable suspicion about anything "institutional." Institutions, in our view, were impediments to the just solutions that the times needed. It seemed to us that institutions were in the way of the civil rights movement, ending the Vietnam War, and dealing with systemic poverty. If anything, we were anti-institutional; institutions were the source of problems, not the means by which problems could be solved and social capital generated.

In a private moment at that anniversary celebration, we laughed at how life had turned out for us. Tom had given the best of his career years to building an institution, and I was at ATS, whose mission is the enhancement and improvement of theological schools. We wondered if something had gone wrong. Had we lost our youthful moral vision and been co-opted by institutional evil? Or, had we finally come to understand that institutions were society's best means of holding on to an important value from prior generations and making it available to successive generations? In the end, I think that the second explanation is more satisfying. Faced with the fundamental change in an institution

that had formed both of us, we realized how a seminary, at its best, embodies a religious vision and, at its best, passes it on.

Osceola McCarty quit school in the sixth grade and began working. For the next seventy-five years, she did laundry and ironing. She lived very humbly and over the decades saved most of the money that she made—which by the time she was almost 90 amounted to \$150,000. She gave it all to the University of Southern Mississippi, which is located in the city where she lived, and made this comment: "I wanted to share my wealth with the children . . . I never minded work, but I was always so busy, busy, busy. Maybe I can make it so the children don't have to work like I did." Osceola knew how to think institutionally.

*[A] seminary, at its best, embodies a religious vision and, at its best, passes it on.*

What a great time for leadership. It is a time in which leadership will make a perceptible difference in schools. It is a time when institutions need wise leadership, and all the wisdom that is needed is available. It is a time in which frail institutions need tending because a religious vision, a sacred vision, needs a home that can preserve it, perfect it, and pass it on to the future. ♦

#### ENDNOTES

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*Daniel Aleshire is executive director of ATS. He presented this paper at the Association's New Presidents' Seminar in San Antonio, Texas, in January 2010.*



# Bookends: The value of POMs from start to finish

By Danny M. West

Since the mid-90s, the Profiles of Ministry (POM) instrument has served a central and functional purpose in our school. The instrument is linked to the spiritual formation curriculum of our institution and is folded into the introductory spiritual formation course that assists students in understanding and processing their individual calls to ministry.

The placement of the POM in our spiritual formation core is fundamental to our understanding of the value of the instrument in assisting students as they wrestle with the spiritual, vocational, and personal implications of ministry. Hence, the POM serves as an invaluable, indeed indispensable, resource for entering students. Currently our school implements only Stage 1 into our core, but this rich instrument has served us and our students in innumerable ways. Moreover, the initial spiritual formation class requires an end-of-semester reflection based upon a series of objectives that frame our curricular structure. In that paper, students are asked to incorporate their personal findings from the POM into a set of learning goals and objectives that we track over the course of their careers. That information is then revisited one final time in their final semester of study. Thus the POM serves as a set of bookends to enable students to track personal growth and development over the course of three years.

*[The] one-on-one interpretive sessions for each of my students . . . [are] one of the richest investments I make in the lives of my students.*

Initially I was advised to offer group interpretations of the POM, and I did so my first semester, but after one such session, I determined that the intrinsic individual findings were of too great a value to squander in a plenary session.

Consequently, I now offer one-on-one interpretive sessions for each of my students at the end of the semester. Those who serve in the academy understand the normal frenzy and pressure that accompanies the last days of school. For my personal schedule, it would be far better to offer a group interpretation, but I am so deeply passionate about the value of the POM that I now carve out significant time to work with our students in understanding the data that is before them. Frankly, it is one of the richest investments I make in the lives of my students and one of the strongest contributions I make to the Kingdom. For what is at stake in the holy conversations that follow is the very nature of the kind of ministers that our school sends forth. That in itself is worth the long hours and countless sessions I schedule to aid our students in the important Kingdom work of being appropriately formed as a minister of the gospel.

Having served as the primary interpreter for our school for eight years, I have seen firsthand the indisputable power of the instrument to aid students in “coming clean” with ambiguous convictions and hidden agendas. At the outset of every new semester I set my students up with a teaser. As I explain the POM process, I tell of my good experiences with the instrument and how invaluable it has been for the students who have gone before them. The students have found great vocational and ministerial clarity as a result of the interpretive conversations.

Typically there is a degree of understandable skepticism about the effectiveness of the instrument among first-year seminarians. They all but say to me, “nothing can be *that* good, Dr. West.” I smile and reply, “Hold that thought until the end of the semester.” Having sifted through hundreds of profiles, I can count on one hand the number of times students have genuinely disagreed with the findings. The overwhelming sentiment of my students is, “How could such an impersonal instrument

give me such an intimate and accurate portrayal of myself?" My greatest joy in the interpretive phase is witnessing the power of honest self-assessment to transform the lives of my students. Many are genuinely unaware of potentially negative behaviors and unwholesome trends in their ministerial identity. The POM provides me, as professor and mentor, the empirical leverage I often need to bring students to a place of authentic self-awareness. When that happens, and it routinely does, the result is a positive and often life-changing result.

I recently received an email from a former student (who incidentally did not graduate) asking if I would provide a letter of reference on her behalf for a graduate program. While I was delighted to assist her in the process, what intrigued me most was her reference to the POM. Evidently her profile empowered and affirmed her belief that God has equipped her to be a counselor. Years later I am encouraged that the POM results remain central to her vocational assessment and ministerial identity.

Not only do the individual profiles provide remarkable insight to students, but the group profiles also offer a glimpse into what is happening within our collective student body. The implications are enormous for virtually every aspect of our school. As we note the prevailing trends, it allows us to gauge the theological images of our first-year students, both their vocational indicators and their personal tendencies. It also allows our recruiting team to assess the kind of students who actually enroll in our school and if those students match the identifiable markers that constitute the DNA of our school. Furthermore, there are curricular implications at stake as well. The vocational trends that develop within group profiles may enable us to keep tabs on the interests of our students and areas where as an institution we need to tweak our curriculum. Frankly, in the past we have not done as much work with the group profiles as we ought, but that trend is already changing, and I envision this resource to remain central to our work.

I am a firm believer in the effectiveness of the POM. It has served our purposes well and continues to contribute to the developing ministerial identity of our students. From my perspective one can hardly ask more of an instrument than that. ♦



*Danny M. West is associate professor of preaching and pastoral studies at M. Christopher White School of Divinity, Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, North Carolina.*

## Selected highlights of the fall Entering Student Questionnaire

The 2009–10 group profile from this fall's Entering Student Questionnaire included 5,848 responses from 155 schools. The following highlights should provide a helpful sketch of the overall findings.

Entering student characteristics:

- ♦ Students were most likely to have learned about a school from either a friend, graduate, or pastor, and their first contact with that school was via email or the Internet.
- ♦ Students enrolling in member schools most typically have an undergraduate degree in the social/behavioral sciences, humanities, or technical studies; however, 27.4 percent also have advanced degrees.
- ♦ More than half (54.3%) of the students entering theological school held elected or appointed leadership positions in their local church, another church body, or a religious organization.
- ♦ Students typically come from a suburban church whose membership is 100–249.
- ♦ Slightly more than one third (34.8%) of commuter students travel less than a half-hour; 16.6 percent travel as much as one hour.
- ♦ Nearly one quarter (22.9%) of students have one or two dependents; 13.0 percent have three or more dependents.

Financial support, debt, and employment among entering seminarians:

- ♦ Nearly three in five (61.6%) students consider financial aid assistance a significant consideration in choosing a school.
- ♦ Most students brought no debt with them; however, 13.5 percent had an educational debt load of \$30,000 or more, and 7.6 percent had a noneducational debt load of \$30,000 or more.
- ♦ Full-time students enrolled in an MDiv program intend on working more than twenty hours a week. ♦

# Promoting environmental stewardship at theological institutions

By Gregory W. Haselden

## GREEN is not a four-letter word

For years, Erskine Theological Seminary, whose main campus is nestled in the rural academic village of Due West, South Carolina, has infused the concept of stewardship into its curriculum as it trains students for ministry. Recently, that curriculum has been expanded to include *environmental* stewardship, and its application is taking root in day-to-day life at the institution.

The genesis of Erskine's current environmental stewardship initiative began in 2007 when the Erskine College and Theological Seminary president, Randall T. Ruble, issued a challenge to the campus community to become "green." The Erskine family generally welcomed this announcement; however, this new initiative contained some inherent questions regarding implementation strategy, faculty and student participation, funding requirements, and ultimately how to sustain the sustainability program.

Ironically, environmental stewardship was not a completely new concept at Erskine. In the 1990s, the institution had begun a recycling program, but after a brief time, the program's effectiveness and campus interest began to wane. Several other attempts by faculty and students at promoting environmental stewardship had

The administration responded to this question by first establishing a robust Green and Sustainability Committee with broad representation from Erskine's constituencies. This committee understood from the outset that it would have the current and ongoing support and commitment of the president and the senior administration, an essential ingredient that previous initiatives had lacked. Next, Erskine, in collaboration with its facilities management and dining services partner, Aramark Higher Education, developed a comprehensive environmental stewardship plan with short-term and longer-term strategies. This "umbrella approach" has proved to be superior to previous models that supported various initiatives from time to time with only a loose connection.

## Short-term strategies

Erskine began its environmental stewardship program with a renewed and expanded emphasis on recycling to include cardboard, aluminum, plastic, paper, and yard waste. Why? Essentially, everyone can participate in recycling. With the financial assistance of a state grant, blue recycling containers soon appeared throughout all campus buildings and office suites. Faculty, staff, and students were and continue to be educated on the recycling program through periodic emails, campus signage, and convocation programs; residence hall recycling competitions have been established. To date recycling has received campuswide support with more than 10,000 pounds of recyclable waste avoiding the landfill annually. Yard waste has been entirely diverted from the landfill through composting and the conversion of limbs and branches into mulch for flowerbeds.

With the success of the recycling program, Erskine's technology department initiated an e-cycling program whereby old computers and related accessories are completely recycled without the introduction of toxic chemicals and metals into the environment.

*The Chinese proverb — "Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand" — summarizes well Erskine's approach to educating the campus community [about environmental stewardship].*

sprouted over the years and then withered shortly thereafter. With this historical perspective in mind, the administration, in collaboration with the Erskine community, realized it had to develop a strategy that would answer the question, "How do we begin an effective environmental stewardship program and then sustain it?"

Changes in Erskine's dining facilities soon followed the recycling program due to the high traffic volume of students and faculty. The elimination of food trays led the dining environmental stewardship initiative, resulting in decreased water and chemical consumption in the dish room and a 12 percent reduction in food waste. Single-use napkin dispensers with 100 percent recycled napkins were introduced; disposable containers were replaced with biodegradable products; and used cooking oil began to be recycled. Erskine purchases state-grown produce when it is available.

In the area of building maintenance, Erskine facilities management has aggressively replaced existing cleaning supplies with only green seal certified chemicals and has introduced new chemical mixing stations. These stations allow the institution to purchase chemicals in a bulk, concentrated form and require the staff's use of measured chemical amounts versus "free-pour." Further, Erskine has made conversions in its restrooms to include sensor-activated paper towel and soap dispensers and coreless paper tissue, which reduce paper waste and custodial service visits; Erskine has replaced older facilities' vehicles with battery-powered utility carts, a further savings in gasoline purchases and environmental emissions.


### Longer-term strategies

The environmental stewardship horizon is replete with opportunities. While Erskine's program remains in its infancy, future initiatives include energy and water management and conservation, LEED certification on all new construction, and further reduction in the institution's carbon footprint.

In these challenging economic times, financial resources to support environmental stewardship programs are often limited-to-nonexistent. Erskine has been blessed to receive several grants from the state and from private foundations to catapult the institution's plan. Savings from current initiatives are returned to the program so that environmental stewardship continues to receive funding and remains an institutional priority.

### In the end

Environmental stewardship at Erskine Theological Seminary is more than a faddish phrase or politically correct lingo in a recruiting brochure; it is a part of the institution's culture and identity. From classroom instruction and curriculum en-



# Joint Conference

November 18–20, 2010 • Orlando, FL

For the first time, **chief financial officers** and **technology professionals** will hold concurrent meetings, both centering on the theme, *Embracing Change: Inspiring Shared Vision for the Future*. Conference workshops will be a mix of those tailored for each respective group and those focusing on the joint work of these positions. Topics will address technical resources as well as important strategies to navigate the changes that are required to meet the current educational, technological, and financial climate within theological education.

Online registration—limited to the first 150 participants—will be available on the ATS Web site ([www.ats.edu](http://www.ats.edu)) by July 2010. The registration deadline is October 8. We look forward to your participation in this event. Please email Chris Meinzer ([meinzer@ats.edu](mailto:meinzer@ats.edu)) or Linda Giehll ([giehll@ats.edu](mailto:giehll@ats.edu)) if you have any questions.

hancements to campus lifestyle changes, students and faculty are educated and engaged, both of which remain paramount to a successful program.

The Chinese proverb—“Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I’ll understand”—summarizes well Erskine’s approach to educating the campus community.

After all, as stewards of God’s creation, we are expected to gratefully and responsibly use the resources and gifts entrusted to our care. ♦



*Gregory W. Haselden is vice president for finance and operations at Erskine College and Theological Seminary in Due West, South Carolina.*

# Akwaaba: Thoughts on theological education and the Global South

By Mark W. Hamilton

All North American theological seminaries face two important facts regardless of their denominational heritages, financial positions, or structural challenges: The center of Christianity and its most vital region lies in the poor Global South; and theological education in the wealthy tenth of the world, the new periphery, is in a state of ferment as the questions of the nineteenth century shaping the very structures of our theological disciplines and their interrelationships seem increasingly irrelevant. New church structures, reinvigorated ecumenical interest in classical Christianity, and the growing need to explain and justify the role of faith in the West force us to rethink who and what we seek to be and do. Ours are challenging times, yes, but also seasons for new creation.

This lesson became a little more tangible for me during my recent trip to Accra, Ghana, a growing city of several million. The ever-present *trotros*, or minivans stuffed with passengers; the street vendors carrying impossibly large baskets of food on their heads; the innumerable astonishing signs announcing God's choices in hair care and car repair—all these signs of life almost overwhelm the visitor with a sense of urgency and growth. My job was to give a series of lectures on Old Testament theology for students in our school's extension program, many of them mature leaders of churches and theological educators themselves, seeking further education. While ostensibly the teacher of Scripture, I also got to play the role of learner about the role of ancient texts in a contemporary setting not my own.

Two moments during my trip seem particularly revealing metaphors for the state of theological education in our interconnected world. One came during our discussion one afternoon of the book of Job and its stringent interrogation of God's justice. "Can God be just while allowing some to suffer want while others flourish?" One of my students, not previously the most articulate, said that he had often wondered the

same thing. "Think about the people in Burkina Faso," he said. "Why do they have so little when we here in Accra have so much?" Perspective matters, and my American condescension, which would have changed the names of the countries just a bit, got pulled up short.

A second moment came during a visit to El Mina Castle, one of sixteen European forts along the Gold Coast built as transshipment points for the slave trade between the late 1400s and the late 1700s. Atop the dungeons in which men and women were stuffed awaiting transport, often living and dying in their own waste, sat a lovely church. Worshipers there could see posted above the main entrance an inscription from the 132nd Psalm, which speaks of the beauty of Zion and the providential care of God in choosing it. It did not require an academic's heightened sense of irony and tragedy to spot the obscenity of the builders' view of church or the ways in which it served as shorthand for the relationship of European Christianity to Africa and much of the rest of the world. Evil drops its disguises in such a place.

But in these two anecdotes lies a paradox, a tangle whose unraveling might tell us something about the future of theological education and our own place in it. It is this: the theological imagination that we seek to inculcate in our students is not a Western invention, just as Christianity is not a Western religion (and never was). We teach texts and practices that began in the ancient Near East, traveled around the Mediterranean, north and west to Europe as well as east as far as China, and latterly took root in every part of the globe. For a century or two, theological education became entangled (for good and ill) with Western universities and similar institutions, but theological imagination and practice can flourish elsewhere as well as there. So powerful is the theological imagination that the cruelties of some religionists did not prevent even their victims from discovering in the gospel a liberating word.



Photo courtesy of Mark Hamilton

Fort Conraadsburg and the city of Elmina. The Dutch built a rival castle across from Elmina in 1666 in order to seize a share of the gold and slave trades. Today, Elmina is a thriving fishing village, though the reminders of a troubling past remain ever present.

These realities imply, I think, the beginning of an answer to my opening question: what has the shift of Christianity to the Global South to do with the future of theological education in North America? A great deal, it turns out. We have an unprecedented opportunity to form partnerships with emerging ecclesial structures in order to enrich everyone. Let me make some practical suggestions.

First, we must ask what problems theological education must address today. Ideas have histories, and many of the questions driving our subdisciplines came about in the Christendom of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, under the influence of which many of us learned to treat texts, practices, structures, and persons as “other,” as objects to be analyzed, critiqued, and occasionally dismantled. We no longer live in such a Christendom, and deconstruction is not our primary task, for there is little left to deconstruct. The challenges of reconstruction and renewal, often through recovery of ancient views of the work of God, present far more interesting and promising theological approaches in the

twenty-first century. We do well to respond to those challenges in the company of women and men who lead churches in the poorer part of our world, whose questions and concerns differ from the ones we have inherited.

Second, we must address squarely the complex roles of capitalism in a critical-constructive way. Encounters with theologians in the economically developing world should remind us that utopian schemes and pleasant words about justice must be translated into structures and experiences. In our own lifetimes, socialism lost the race to bring human well-being, and while capitalism won, its victory has proven a mixed blessing. Critical engagement with problems of development would help those of us in the rich West rethink our own relationships to the social and economic life of our own societies. Such engagement is critical for the development of the theological imagination of clergy.

Third, we could create deep consciousness of the developing world in North American students by having them study there. How would North American clergy be different if they spent



Photos courtesy of Mark Hamilton

LEFT: Elmina Castle. Built by the Portuguese in 1482 on the Gold Coast, the castle quickly became an important transshipment point on the route of the Atlantic Slave Trade. It changed hands several times. Today it is a monument to the victims of the West African genocide and is a UNESCO World Heritage site.



BELOW: Students of the Graduate School of Theology at Abilene Christian University. Living in various parts of Ghana, most of the students are already ministers of long-standing churches—some of which are quite large.

an extended period of their seminary experience outside the rich tenth of the world? How would their priorities and perspectives change? What if seminaries worked together to create such study opportunities as well as faculty exchanges? While financial, legal, and health concerns would require administrative leadership on our part, the potential for aiding students to rethink their roles as church leaders would be significant.

Fourth, the most critical piece is that we begin to do theology together. Initiatives of Western learned societies—such as the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Academy of Religion, which are making books available at low or no cost to non-Western scholars and schools—are a helpful start. But we can do much more, and with modern technology we can do so without breaking the bank. Forging theological discourses around key problems in contemporary life while drawing on the resources of Scripture and tradition, we can create a truly ecumenical climate in which a Ghanaian Pentecostal, a Korean Presbyterian, a North American Baptist, and a Croatian Catholic (change the names as you like) can work together in a virtual environment and, on occasion, face to face. The transformative possibilities for all involved are difficult to imagine.

In our contemporary setting, in which many seminaries are struggling to pay their bills and all of us are rethinking relationships to constituencies, curricula, qualifications of faculty, and a host

of other very practical issues, it is more important than ever to dream a bit. We

need to see beyond the moment to discern the shape of the future that is emerging around us, in which our inherited position of wealth and privilege will become increasingly tenuous at the same moment that the centers of Christianity move elsewhere. Neither nostalgia nor an attitude of theological superiority will help us.

On my trip, I learned two helpful words in Twi, a major Western African language with about eight million speakers. One was *akwaaba* (“welcome”) and the other was *me da ase* (“thank you”). Perhaps they serve as watchwords for believable futures of theological education in North America as we build global partnerships. Theological practices rooted in hospitality, attentive listening, and gratitude for the other will help us overcome colonialism and post-colonial guilt and move toward a true partnership as we do theology together. Let us not allow our current crises to go to waste as we move into the future awaiting us. ♦



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# C(h)AOS Theory

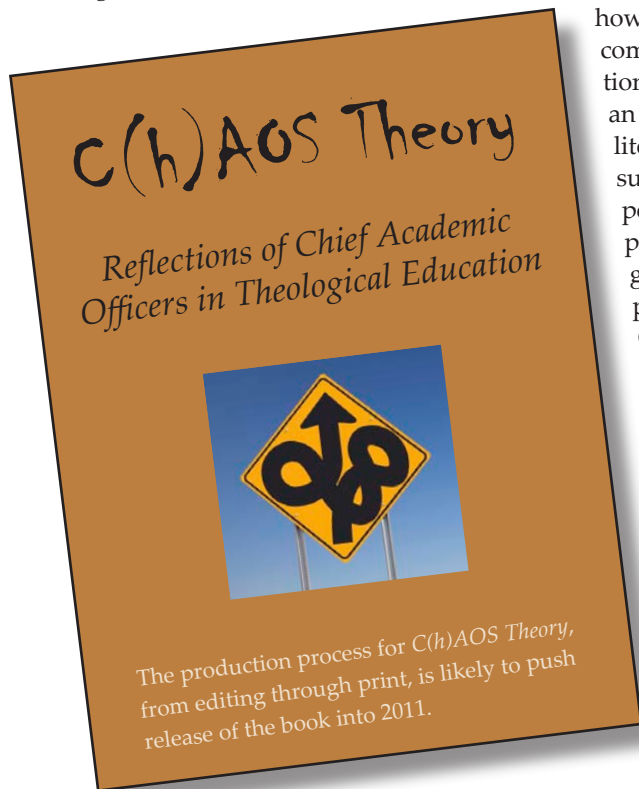
Upcoming book to offer thirty-three perspectives on the dean's job

At long last, a book of essays by deans, about deans, and for deans, is on its way to the publisher. *C(h)AOS Theory: Reflections of Chief Academic Officers in Theological Education* explores how deans can read their institutions' contexts, nurture their commitments to all their constituencies, and develop competencies in areas as diverse as conflict negotiation, budgeting, formation, scholarship, and assessment for accreditation. Edited by Kadi Billman and Bruce Birch, the book contains thirty-three essays by current and former deans.

As Billman points out in her introduction, it is hoped that this volume will provide not only helpful insights into a challenging position but also a sense of collegiality to serve as "an antidote to the creeping sense of isolation that can prey on deans, especially when—in that 'center' position—it is hard to find someone in whom to freely confide about the discouragements and delights of the work; to share moments of self-doubt or the sense that one has done a good job with a thorny problem; to seek support for standing up for what one believes is best; or to confess that one is terribly uncertain about what approach to take with a given leadership dilemma." And she reminds the reader that "being able to laugh with colleagues while ruminating on serious challenges is a gift."

"There is no one way to speak with a 'dean's' voice," Billman asserts. Consequently, the book contains thirty-three lively and distinct reflections that range in tone from fireside chats with a trusted mentor to step-by-step,

how-to approaches to common job functions. Some present an overview of other literature on the subject. Others share personal stories that provide rarified glimpses into their particular worlds. Collectively, they represent a community of practice that, it is hoped, may stimulate the reflective process, spur creativity, and help deans to find meaning and joy in their work. ♦



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# YouTube killed the theologian: Web 2.0 in theological education

*By Michael Porterfield*

In 1981, MTV signed onto the airwaves with its first music video, "Video Killed the Radio Star" by The Buggles. In hindsight, Cable News Network observed that once "the MTV rocket blasted off its cable platform . . . and planted its flag on the pop-culture moon. . . . [a]rtists embraced the medium or faced extinction."<sup>1</sup> Presently, can we be prescient enough to say that if theology professors do not embrace Web 2.0 in their classrooms, they might face extinction? I want to briefly examine this question using two lenses, educational and ecclesial.

When people first used the World Wide Web, they were navigating through stagnant, content-driven Web pages, but now with Web 2.0 Web sites, we are connecting to one another through dynamic, community-oriented media. "Social software, emerging as a major component of Web 2.0," Jonassen et al. write, "enables people to unite or collaborate through computer-mediated communication and to form online communities. . . . At its heart, however, is the capacity to bring people together and support sharing online communities through the use of technology."<sup>2</sup>

*[C]an we be prescient enough to say that if theology professors do not embrace Web 2.0 in their classrooms, they might face extinction?*

With this in mind, educators do not have to present themselves as static, like the first generation of the Web; rather, they can be dynamic by embracing Web 2.0 technologies. Current Web 2.0 technologies include Google Wave, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, blogs, wikis, podcasts, and more. At the heart of these technologies, as Jonassen et al. state, is bringing people together to collaborate and build new knowledge. Educationally, this is appealing. If educators are using Web 2.0 technologies in their face-to-face

or online classrooms, their students are taking a more active role and demonstrating greater responsibility for their own learning.

Mary Margaret Pazdan, professor of biblical studies at Aquinas Institute of Theology introduces the concept of a "wisdom community," when she proposes that,

The classroom does not have to be a place where the focus of learning is solely on the teacher, where the goal is simply to transmit information, where a few are active while the majority remains passive. The classroom can be a place of dynamic interaction with the events of the day, not an escape from them. While it is tempting for instructors to assume that the success of the learning experience rests on their knowledge and ability to communicate, the model of learning in a wisdom community suggests a new way of thinking about pedagogy.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Esselman, former associate professor of systematic theology at Aquinas Institute, links this concept with computer mediated communication in online theological education. He explains that wisdom in a theological setting "involves the transformation of the person, a dynamic process that unites heart and mind in a holistic movement toward maturity in discipleship. . . . The pedagogy of ministerial formation is committed, then, to nurturing wisdom communities where students and instructors teach and learn from each other."<sup>4</sup>

Web 2.0 tools can be used to foster wisdom communities. For example, students who take the lead in starting threaded discussions may pose new questions for fellow classmates to discuss; this way, instructors can take on a facilitation role when the online conversation lags. Also, students can upload preaching videos to YouTube or a password-protected blog for

students within or beyond their institution to peer review, a method of encounter that Kenrick School of Theology piloted in the fall of 2000.<sup>5</sup> Learning becomes more dynamic when students and instructors teach and learn from one another.

Theology professors can use Web 2.0 technology to enhance the wisdom community and model *communio* for their students. "Wisdom communities reflect the inherent nature of the church as *communio*, the Church gathered into a communion for the sake of mission to the wider world."<sup>6</sup> Theological students are already embracing Facebook, MySpace, blogging, and other online communities in their personal lives; they are experiencing *communio* outside the classroom. Why not incorporate these *communio* experiences into the classroom to make the theological classroom more dynamic and enhance the wisdom community?

The days of professors lecturing an entire class are fading. YouTube is not killing the theologian but rather facilitating his or her ability to engage students in the study of theology. Students are encouraging—and even “demanding”—their theology professors to embrace the collaborative tools of Web 2.0 in order to transform the teaching and learning process. They want the same easy ways of collaborating outside of the classroom brought inside the theology classroom, but they often find themselves in the position of having to initiate their use. For example, students are using Google Docs to collaborate on projects and papers and to study for exams, and the theology professor might make the comment, “What is Google Docs?” When the students explain Google Docs to the professor and how they use it to collaborate, the professor should realize that a new tool can be added to his or her own arsenal and begin to develop proactive ideas concerning how it might be used to facilitate student learning rather than letting



it continue to be used by chance. The theological classroom, in ways like this, becomes a living and growing wisdom community. ♦

#### ENDNOTES

1. Jamie Allen, “MTV: Rewinding 20 years of music revolution,” CNNfyi.com, August 2, 2001, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/fyi/news/08/01/mtv.20/index.html>.
2. David H. Jonassen, Jane Howland, Rose M. Marra, and David P. Crismond, *Meaningful Learning with Technology*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2008), 101.
3. Thomas Esselman, “The Pedagogy of the Online Wisdom Community: Forming Church Ministers in a Digital Age,” *Teaching Theology and Religion* 7, no. 3 (2004): 165.
4. *Ibid.*, 164.
5. Daniel Harris, Victor Klimoski, Beverly Lane, and Sebastian Mahfood, “The Catholic Internet: Seminary Technologies Impacting the Teaching and Learning Environment of the Church,” *Seminary Journal* 9, no. 3 (Winter 2003): 83.
6. Esselman, “Pedagogy of the Online Wisdom Community,” 165.



*Michael Porterfield is a PhD candidate at UIM-St. Louis and holds an MDiv from Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, Missouri.*

# Wired for a sound education

By Danny Russell

It was an irritating, if character-building, element of the student experience: frantically copying jottings from the chalkboard into a notebook before the professor blithely erased them to start filling the slate all over again. Students at Methodist Theological School in Ohio, near Columbus, apparently are having their character

built in new ways now, because the classroom experience has been transformed by technology.

Advanced computers and audio-visual equipment, once considered a collection of glitzy gimmicks, are now commonplace tools that enhance the flow of information. In fact, Academic Dean Randy Litchfield believes the leaps in educational technology should lead to new thinking about the collaborative roles and responsibilities of students.

When he began coordinating classroom technology three years ago, only two classrooms provided built-in capabilities to project notes from a laptop computer onto a screen. “We were using carts to wheel in technology,” he said. Since then, thanks to grants from the Harry C. Moores Foundation, MTSO’s tech team has outfitted all classrooms with projection technology. Faculty members’ desktop computers have been replaced with laptops, which they can easily dock to a lectern in any classroom.

Many professors now have portable tablet PCs, allowing them to write by hand on the computer screen—and have the handwritten notes projected simultaneously on a board at the front of the class. This information, along with audio of the lecture, can be digitally recorded or transmitted offsite.

When the lecture is over, the professor’s original notes can be posted indefinitely on the campus computer system, where students can review them at any time. At its best, this technology allows students to spend less time fretting over notes and more time actually listening and interacting.

“For a seminary, we’ve probably got as strong an in-classroom setup as anywhere,” Litchfield said. That’s why, for the past two years, he and the MTSO technology staff have worked to take the next step, creating a common online space where resources can be shared, calendars can be updated, papers can be submitted and returned, and conversations can be held, all



Photos courtesy of Danny Russell

“For a seminary, we’ve probably got as strong an in-classroom setup as anywhere,” Litchfield said. MTSO’s technology gives students more tools—and more responsibility.

electronically. Using Microsoft software called SharePoint, the Methesco tech team has created what Litchfield calls “a collaboration platform,” hidden from the public portion of the MTSO Web site but accessible to students and faculty.

Here’s a quick example of SharePoint in action: Using campuswide wireless Internet capabilities, a student can put the finishing touches on a term paper in the Dickhaut Library and electronically submit the file to a professor, who can grade it—imbedding comments for the student’s review—before electronically returning it to the student, who might review the marked-up composition over a second cup of coffee in Dunn Dining Hall.

Justin Lipscomb views campus technology from a unique perspective; he’s both the school’s computer technical assistant and a Master of Theological Studies student. From a student’s perspective, he’s grateful for the ability to submit paperless papers and collaborate online with professors and other students.

“It gives us more time to finish our work because we can work right up to the deadline without worrying about having it printed,” Lipscomb said. Furthermore, “It facilitates the idea that I think this school wants to foster by being environmentally conscious and also being a community in all aspects.”

The fostering of a collaborative community is Litchfield’s favorite part of the system. He’s pleased by “the way it facilitates students being exposed to each other’s work and being able to dialogue, critique, and support each other’s work.” In fact, he wants to lead MTSO toward a different way of thinking about the role of students’ work—a new philosophy that gives students greater power and responsibility for contributing to the school’s academic mission.

“I think a lot of students are socialized to think of a paper as a private thing ‘between me and the prof,’” he said. “I want them to think they’re producing something that contributes to the community of inquiry. When they do that, that work is a public contribution. And shoddy work can mess somebody else up.

“To the degree the school is about developing leaders, they have to start thinking that all their work is public work that makes a difference,” Litchfield said. “It’s not just a pile of private papers.”

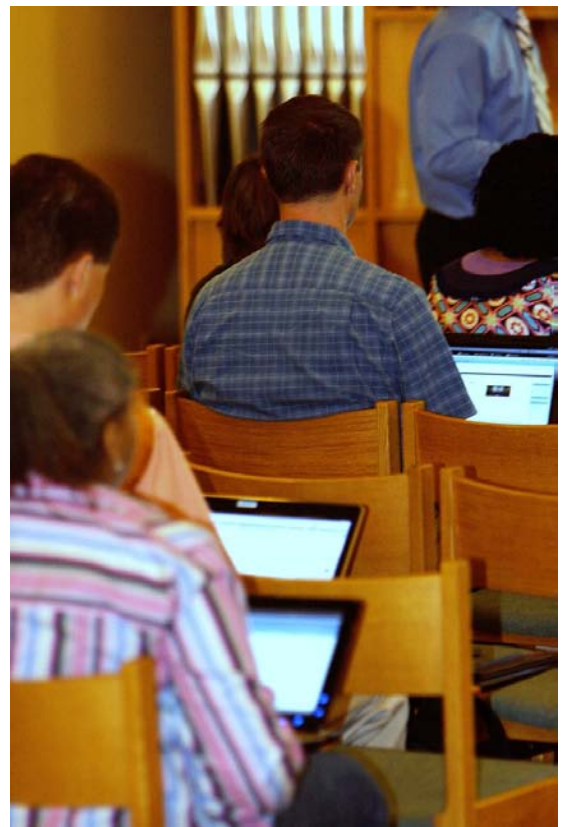
Students’ contributions to the learning process will be vital this fall, when a new distance-learning model will be used for the first time. Two courses, in liturgical prayer and United Methodist history, will be taught as hybrid

classes. The students and professors will meet in person for the first and last classes of the term, but in between, they’ll gather only online.

Members of the class will communicate through discussion boards, postings of student work, electronic readings, and wikis—collaborative online works such as a single, comprehensive course bibliography incorporating three or four sources from each student. There will also be occasional live online meetings, thanks to powerful new software, Connect Pro by Adobe, with audio and presentation capabilities that allow everyone to talk and Webcams that will beam the professors’ images to every screen. It’s rare, Litchfield said, for a graduate school to offer this level of connectivity to a class.

While this harnessing of bits and bytes enhances learning in some dazzling new ways, Litchfield is just as happy about the down-to-earth benefits, from the thousands of saved dollars in paper and photocopying expenses to basic legibility.

As he discussed the process that allows professors to type color-coded comments into students’ original document files, he smiled. “I probably shouldn’t say this,” he said, “but I’m guessing some students can actually read the comments now, where they couldn’t discern the scribbling before.” ♦



Wired for wireless: Laptops were well connected during an orientation session in the Alford.



*Danny Russell is the director of advancement for Methodist Theological School in Ohio. His article first appeared in the Fall 2009 issue of The Story magazine and annual report and is printed with permission of Methodist Theological School in Ohio.*

# Maximizing the inaugural year

By David G. Lalka

The scenario is played out dozens of times each academic year. The board of trustees announces to campus and community alike that a new president has been elected to lead the seminary through challenges to its next phase of growth and contribution. The development leadership and team then face designing an action plan that will maximize the effectiveness of the new president and the inaugural year.

Here are eleven considerations for making the most of that year and, in the process, moving forward the fundraising and friend-raising programs of a seminary.

1. **Design point-of-entry events to introduce the president** to the seminary constituencies—and new individuals—locally, regionally, and as appropriate, nationally. These events may be simple coffees, luncheons, or informal dinners. The key is to keep these events small and intimate, and to engage your leading constituents in selecting new

individuals from their own networks to meet the president.

2. **Create contexts in which the president's areas of expertise are showcased.** Whether the new president is a biblical scholar, a theologian, a church historian, a missiologist, or a leading thinker in the delivery of theological education, the seminary should consider gatherings, lectures, or symposia that allow the president's strengths and credentials to be known.
3. **Invest time with the leading donors** of the seminary. These stakeholders are often the significant funders of the seminary's mission and vision as voiced by former presidents. And though a successful president will attract new stakeholders, embracing and "hearing" these individuals is important.
4. **Enable the president to build and define a vision.** Without a vision donors "perish" (languish). Presidents must articulate the vision. Constituents and donors want to give to something larger than themselves.
5. **Consider arranging mentoring for the president and spouse** on the roles, responsibilities, and decorums for an executive couple. Such mentoring is often especially valuable for executive couples who are new to this role of leadership within a seminary community. It makes the transition to expected levels of leadership more seamless.
6. **Build trustee ownership of the inaugural year.** This ownership should include the intentional involvement of trustees not involved in the selection process. Each trustee should network the president with key friends and new prospects.



7. **Recognize the public inaugural ceremony as the first and MOST important opportunity for the president to cast vision** to peer presidents within a state; in ATS; among foundations; with strategic constituents; and among church, parachurch, and missional organizations. The president needs time after assuming office to craft this vision, and for that reason, inaugurations within the first several months of tenure are less effective. The vision must be compelling.
8. **Consider seminary history in selecting a date-frame for an inauguration.** Rather than settling on an arbitrary date, the history and heritage of the seminary may be advanced in choosing a date that sets this inauguration within the larger tapestry of the seminary. Such a selection sets the new president in the broader traditions of the seminary.
9. **Recognize that stakeholders and faithful donors will most naturally respond to the new president's vision-casting** with "how may we be involved in making this happen?" That question sets the stage for a fundraising "endeavor" or campaign that provides initial resources for implementing the vision. The seminary leadership along with the development team should have a case for support available to help answer this question.
10. **Facilitate the president's time investment in fundraising.** The development team, working through the board, should expect the president to invest at least 50 percent of his or her time in meeting constituents, preaching the vision, and cultivating and soliciting donors. And, the development team must position the president for success with those stakeholders who will fund the vision.
11. **Acknowledge that the intentional activities of an inaugural year will require the investment of budget resources** in development and in the office of the president. It is forever true that a seminary has only one chance to make a first impression with a new president. Funding of the inaugural year should provide resources for doing things with excellence not necessarily with extravagance.

## 60 Great Ideas in 60 Minutes



What originally started as a quest to find sixty great ideas development officers at ATS member schools could share with one another at a DIAP Conference workshop turned out to be seventy-seven fresh and innovative suggestions that have proven to be successful in fundraising. To view the list, please go to the Leadership Education tab on the ATS Web site, [www.ats.edu](http://www.ats.edu), and select the Development Officers link.

Inaugurations are more than ceremonies and gala events. They are about introducing a president, a leader, to the campus community and the stakeholders in particular, and to the wider publics of the seminary. For those introductions to have substance and value, the inaugural year approach makes the most sense. In that year, the president can form and present a vision that will resonate with the campus and inspire investment from stakeholders. ♦

*David G. Lalka is senior consultant and director of executive searches for DVA Navion, NA in Atlanta, Georgia.*



# Enrollment: Steady declines and other shifting sands

By Eliza Smith Brown

Nearly every week, it seems, a reporter calls the ATS offices looking for one particular set of data . . . *What has happened to enrollment?* In the face of the economic woes of the past two years, many of these writers and editors—from secular as well as religious media outlets—want to be able to report that when the going gets tough, the tough go to theological school. While that may be true on some level, enrollment figures have not spiked in response to tough times, as many might have hoped. With the 2009 Annual Report Forms collected and the latest Annual Data Tables posted on the ATS Web site, total enrollment is clearly following the trend that started in 2005, when it began a slow, steady decline of approximately 2 percent per year, with the exception of a slight uptick in 2006.

A closer look at the data reveals more trends in the student population and their choices of

where and what to study. These shifting sands are changing the landscape that theological schools should consider as they tackle strategic planning as well as approaches to specific operational areas such as marketing, curriculum development, and student services.

## **Trend 1: The relative enrollment in ATS member schools is shifting toward a few schools of 500 students or more.**

In more specific terms, the approximately thirty member schools with student bodies of more than 500 account for half of the 75,000 students currently enrolled. This means that just 12 percent of ATS schools service 50 percent of students. This number represents an increase from 2001, when schools with student bodies exceeding 500 accounted for 47 percent of the students in ATS institutions. See figure 1.

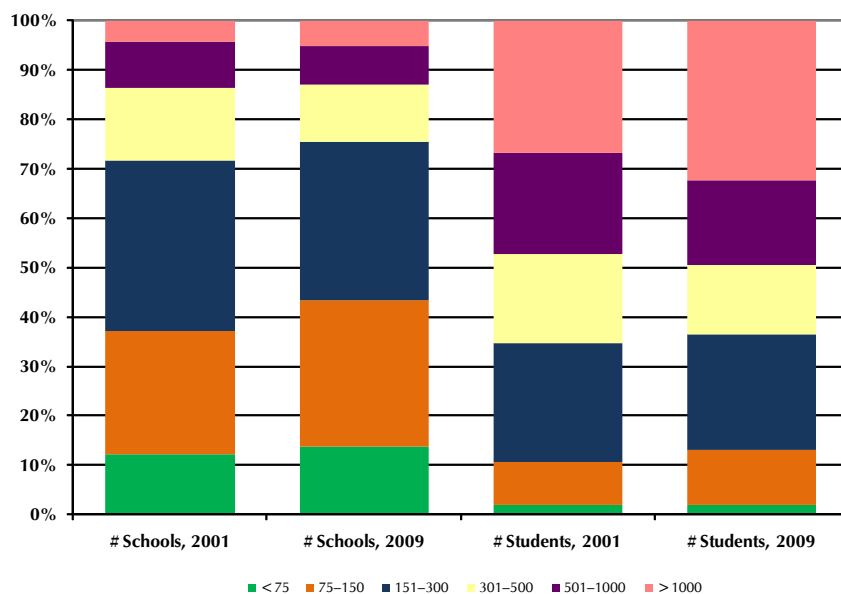
## **Trend 2: The majority of ATS member schools continue to be smaller in size.**

The flip side of trend 1 is that enrollment at the “smaller” schools (i.e., those of 500 or fewer students) is, in the aggregate, decreasing. Yet those smaller schools represent approximately 220 institutions—or 88 percent of ATS membership. The median ATS school, in fact, enrolls about 180 students, down from 197 in 2001.

## **Trend 3: Evangelical schools account for the largest number of students, and they are growing in both number of schools and student population as mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic/Orthodox schools experience slight declines.**

Evangelical institutions currently represent 39 percent of member schools and 60 percent

FIGURE 1 Current membership by student body head count, 2001 vs. 2009



of headcount enrollment, up from 35 percent of schools and 55 percent of total headcount in 2001. Institutions that have joined ATS since 1990 are more likely to be evangelical in perspective. Thus, the number of evangelical institutions has grown as a proportion of the membership. Furthermore, evangelical schools tend to be among the larger ATS members (i.e., more than 500 students), with diversified programs that include offsite locations.

**Trend 4: The MDiv continues to be the dominant degree program pursued by today's students, but the professional MA is the fastest-growing degree program.**

More students are pursuing the MDiv than any other single degree, although those students represent slightly less than half of current enrollment, with the remaining population split among other degree categories. MDiv enrollment as a percentage of the total has not changed since 2001. The fastest-growing degree category over time has been the professional master's degrees, which now represent about 16 percent of total enrollment in degree programs, up from 13.7 percent in 2001. Degrees in general theological studies, such as the Master of Arts in Religion, and degrees related to advanced ministerial programs each represent about 13 percent of total enrollment in degree programs. The advanced research degrees, such as the PhD and ThD, represent about 9 percent of total enrollment in degree programs.

**Trend 5: Female enrollment continues to grow as a percentage of the total, with particular strength in the advanced ministerial degree programs.**

Since 1981, enrollment of women in most degree programs has generally risen, with occasional slight declines or levelings. As women's access to MDiv programs and pastoral roles increases, their subsequent representation among DMin students will likely grow as well. Female enrollment in advanced ministerial degree programs, now approaching 20 percent, has been on a steady rise for nearly thirty years and has more than doubled. In fact, while they represent the second smallest percentage of female students (after advanced theological research), the advanced ministerial degree programs are the fastest and most steadily growing degree program area for women.



To ensure that member schools glean maximum benefit from the available data, ATS will host two Webinars with a focus on institutional characteristics, enrollment, finances, and faculty composition. These Webinars will be appropriate for senior administration, faculty, and/or board members. Chris Meinzer, ATS director of finance and administration, will lead the sixty-minute Webinars on:

**Thursday, April 22, 11:00 a.m. (EST)**

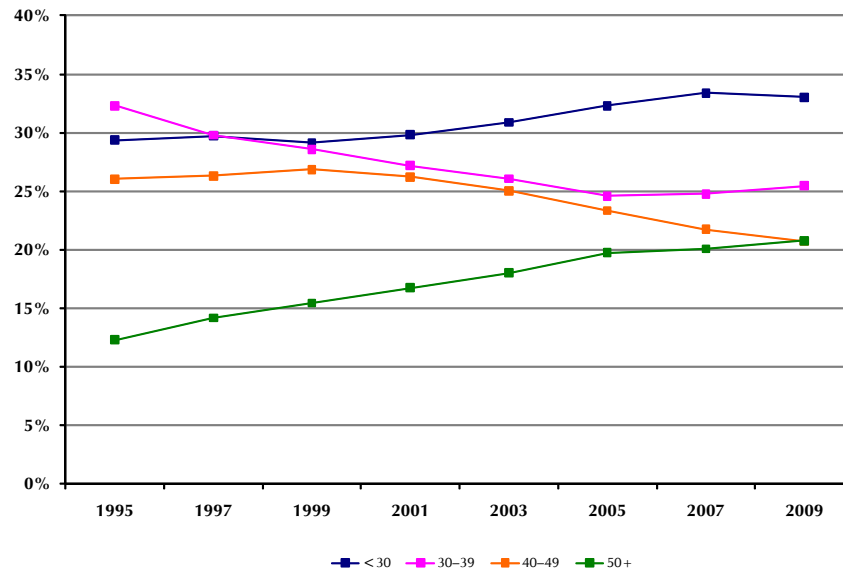
**Tuesday, April 27, 2:00 p.m. (EST)**

Registration is on a first-come first-served basis, with a limit of thirty participants per session. To register, email a request to Chris Meinzer at [meinzer@ats.edu](mailto:meinzer@ats.edu).

**Trend 6: Persons of color continue to represent a steadily growing percentage of total enrollment.**

While still representing a minority that belies shifting demographics, enrollment of students of color continues to grow as a percentage of total enrollment. Racial/ethnic student enrollment has grown more than fourfold over the past thirty years. Of those who report ethnicity, since 1977 the percentage of enrollment represented by ra-

FIGURE 2 Relative head count enrollment by age, 1995–2009



cial/ethnic students has grown from 5.8 percent to 25.4 percent. (It should be noted that this figure does not account for the 9.2 percent of those reporting who are in North America on visas, many of whom are racial/ethnic students.)

**Trend 7: While the under-30 crowd is still the largest sector of students, those in their 50s are growing in number.**

A look at headcount enrollment at ATS schools since 1995 reveals some interesting shifts. Students under 30 represent 33 percent of the total, still the largest cohort. The 30-somethings experienced a decline from 33 percent to 25 percent between 1995 and 2005 that has since leveled off, at least for now. What is particularly notable is a steady pattern of growth in the over-50 cohort, and a concurrent steady decline in the 40–49 cohort, so that the two are now equal. Specifically, the 40–49 group declined from 25 to 20 percent of the total headcount enrollment from 1995 to 2009, while the over-50 group grew from 12 to 20 percent over the same period. In general, Roman Catholic students tend to be younger than the total population of MDiv students in all ATS schools. See figure 2.

**The bottom line: Perceived value**

The numbers tell us a great deal about theological schools and the students who attend them.

And schools would be wise to study these statistics in order to better understand the larger context in which they operate. But it is also important to step back from the trends and attend to the bottom line: Despite the declines in overall enrollment, more than 75,000 students begin or return to theological school each year. They are there to prepare to practice ministry or teach others who will ultimately do so. And the more than 14,000 who complete

degrees each year continue to give high marks to the preparation they have received, according to a recent Auburn Study,<sup>1</sup> a 2008 telephone survey of more than 1,000 Protestant pastors by LifeWay,<sup>2</sup> and the Graduating Student Questionnaires (GSQ) completed annually by graduates at more than 55 percent of ATS member schools. In the midst of shifting sands, ATS schools continue to train people who are well equipped to enter ministry and related pursuits in service to churches and communities of faith. ♦

ENDNOTES

1. Barbara G. Wheeler, Sharon L. Miller, and Daniel O. Aleshire, *How Are We Doing: The Effectiveness of Theological Schools as Measured by the Vocations and Views of Graduates*, Auburn Studies, no. 13 (New York: Auburn Theological Seminary, November 2007).
2. Brooklyn Lowery, ed., “Pastors Continue to Value, Use Seminary Education” (March 22, 2010), <http://www.lifeway.com/article/170183/> (accessed March 30, 2010).

*Eliza Smith Brown is director, communications and external relations for The Association of Theological Schools in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Chris Meinzer, director, finance and administration for the Association, contributed to this article.*



# Twenty research projects receive Lilly Theological Research Grants

The Association and Lilly Endowment have announced the recipients of the 2009–10 Lilly Theological Research Grants.

## Faculty Fellowships

**Bill T. Arnold**, Asbury Theological Seminary  
*The Singularity of God in the Hebrew Scriptures: Foundations for Interfaith Dialogue*

**David Arthur deSilva**, Ashland Theological Seminary  
*Neither Tamil Nor Sinhalese: Reading Galatians From a Sri Lankan Context*

**Forough Jahanbakhsh**, Queen's Theological College  
*The Theological Aspect of Reformed Islam*

**Dirk G. Lange**, Luther Seminary  
*Rethinking Communal Prayer: A Baptismal Discipline*

**Joel Marcus LeMon**, Candler School of Theology of Emory University  
*Picturing Divine Violence in the Psalms*

**Cynthia Diane Moe-Lobeda**, Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry  
*Christian Ethics for the "Uncreators": Morality in the Face of Systemic Evil*

**Gale A. Yee**, Episcopal Divinity School  
*Open Your Hand to the Poor: The Bible and the Millennium Development Goals*

## Theological Scholars Grants

**Max J. Lee**, North Park Theological Seminary  
*Greco-Roman Philosophy of Mind and Paul: Mapping the Apostle's Moral Landscape*

**B. Diane Lipsett**, Wake Forest University Divinity School  
*Ancient Interpreters of Matthew's Parables: Rereading Realism, Rewriting Metaphor*

**Leo G. Perdue**, Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University  
*Subverting Empires: Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation and Contemporary China*

## Research Expense Grants

**Michael B. Aune**, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary  
*"All for Love": Conversations about Liturgy and Christology in the Early Twenty-first Century*

**Jennifer Ryan Ayres**, McCormick Theological Seminary  
*Grounded: Embodied Christian Practices of Food, Earth, and Justice*

**Mark D. Baker**, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary  
*Contextualizing Galatians in Peru*

**Russell William Dalton**, Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University  
*Children's Bibles in the United States: Adapting the Bible for Youth, 1776 to Today*

**Wil Gafney**, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia  
*Translating God, Translating God's Words: A Womanist and Feminist Biblical Hebrew Translation Primer*

**Gordon L. Heath**, McMaster Divinity College  
*Baptists and the South African War, 1899–1902: A View from Five Countries*

**Jaroslav Z. Skira**, Regis College  
*The Second Vatican Council Diaries of the Ukrainian Eastern Catholic Metropolitan Maxim Hermaniuk*

## Collaborative Research Grants

**Hans Boersma**, Regent College  
**Matthew Levering**, University of Dayton  
*Heaven on Earth? Exploring Catholic–Evangelical Dialogue*

**Terry Charles Muck**, Asbury Theological Seminary  
**Frances S. Adeney**, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary  
**Arvind Sharma**, McGill University  
*Participatory Mission Theology*

**Brooks Schramm**, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg  
**Kirsi Stjerna**, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg  
*Martin Luther, the Bible, and the Jewish People*

# Six faculty members named as 2010–11 Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology



John R. Bowlin

The Association of Theological Schools and The Henry Luce Foundation have named six scholars from ATS member schools as Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology for 2010–11.

Selected on the basis of the strength of their proposals to conduct creative and innovative theological research, the Fellows will engage in year-long research in various areas of theological inquiry. The 2010–11 Fellows constitute the seventeenth class of scholars to be appointed since the inception of the program in 1993, bringing the total number of Luce Fellows to 117. The program is supported by a grant from The Henry Luce Foundation, honoring the late Henry Luce III.

At the conclusion of their research year, the Fellows will gather at the annual Luce Fellows Conference to present and critique their work and to discuss with both current and past Luce Fellows how their work may impact the life of the church and the broader society. They will also present their findings for publication in popular religious journals.

The 2010–11 Fellows, their institutions, and projects are:

## **John R. Bowlin**

Princeton Theological Seminary

*Counting Virtues: The Difference that Transcendence Makes*

Within the broad outlines of Christian eudaimonism, John R. Bowlin's research considers how this tradition enumerates the virtues. He asks: how are the virtues distinguished one from another, how are they implicated in each others' acts, and how might their many acts be reduced to one, whether in time or in eternity? Bowlin focuses on the moral virtues, both acquired and infused, but also considers the theological virtues. Inspiration for the inquiry comes from Augustine and Aquinas. Bowlin's aim is not simply to consider whether and how these two figures specify, enumerate, and then unify the virtues. He also

desires to see how they manage the competing pressures of time and eternity in their respective accounts of the moral life. Bowlin's hope is that we might understand how these pressures ought to be managed, how the virtues ought to be coordinated, especially by those who share something like their theological commitments.

## **Francis Xavier Clooney**

Harvard University Divinity School

*When God is Absent: Toward a Theo-Dramatic Reading of Religious Diversity*

Francis X. Clooney draws on classical Hindu and Christian texts and commentaries for fresh insight into today's religious diversity (glimpsed through the lens of contemporary religious poetry), focusing on the widespread experience of God's apparent absence and the human search for spiritual meaning. Clooney engages the Song of Songs, particularly portions expressing the young woman's search for her absent beloved, along with the ninth century Hindu classic Tiruvaymoli, particularly songs of the woman whose unpredictable divine lover does not appear. Clooney argues that the two texts are complementary but distinctive: the Song highlights the tumult of love culminating in union, while Tiruvaymoli evokes love remembered, lost, reunion hoped for. In both traditions, Clooney argues, God behaves mysteriously, is occasionally absent, must be sought; received truths are respected, yet rethought in light of actual divine-human encounters. To give this dramatic reading disciplined form, deepening its theological possibilities, he draws on Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, whose five-volume Theo-Drama presents the divine-human relationship as a drama, where God and humans participate in vital, never predictable exchanges. Clooney meditates on how study across religious boundaries has shaped his own encounter with God.



Francis Xavier Clooney



Linda A. Mercadante

### **Linda A. Mercadante**

Methodist Theological School in Ohio  
*Unfettered Belief, Untethered Practice: Thinking Theologically about 'Spiritual but not Religious'*

Nonreligious spiritual seekers claim that doctrine is far less important than—even nonessential to—spiritual practice. Linda Mercadante perceives an alternative metanarrative, however, developing among those who claim to be “spiritual but not religious” (SBNR). She maintains that this influential ethos has theological implications, challenging and offering opportunities to Christianity especially in the areas of epistemology and concept of God. Ironically, Mercadante argues, despite its anti-hegemonic self-presentation, the SBNR ethos actually homogenizes and markets the voice of disparate spiritual “others” while championing hybridity and antidogmatism. She addresses the emerging narrative theologically, focusing on the four main conceptual areas of transcendence, human nature, community, and life-after-death. Mercadante’s approach includes in-depth interviews, observation, online and print research, blog conversation, and site visits. She notes an underlying eagerness among some SBNRs to excavate and examine belief.

### **Mary Clark Moschella**

Wesley Theological Seminary  
*Anatomy of Joy: A Pastoral Theological Call for Joy in the Ministry and in Life*

Mary Clark Moschella’s research involves the construction of a pastoral and practical theology of joy. She maintains that most of the twentieth-century models of pastoral care and counseling still taught in U.S. seminaries were developed in response to human pathology. These models were adopted to address the pastoral needs of those suffering from physical and/or psychiatric illnesses as well as grief and loss. While the courage and competence needed to care for and with those who suffer are important dimensions of pastoral formation, Moschella sets out to cultivate another set of capacities in pastoral caregivers: capacities for wonder, delight, resilience, and deep and abiding joy. According to Moschella, congregations need leaders who can practice the fullness of joy that is proclaimed in the Scriptures and hymns of the church. Her research will identify theologies and practices that help clergy and laity cultivate strengths such as resilience, gratitude, generosity, and joy in ordinary life, in ministry, and even in the midst of suffering. Her work will “flesh out” resources that support positive, balanced, and hopeful approaches to Christian life today.

### **Carol A. Newsom**

Candler School of Theology of Emory University  
*Constructions of Good and Evil in Biblical and Early Postbiblical Literature*

Carol A. Newsom cites philosopher Susan Neiman, who asserts that the problem of evil “is fundamentally a problem about the intelligibility of the world as a whole.” Drawing upon this insight, Newsom seeks to organize the biblical constructions of good and evil in a logical typology. The wisdom tradition affirms that the cosmos has a divinely sanctioned order, but it is conflicted as to whether this order is intelligible and morally usable (so Proverbs) or whether it ultimately is not (so, in different ways, Job and Ecclesiastes). Newsom notes that the skeptical wisdom tradition refuses, however, to suggest that either the human mind or the cosmic order is itself seriously flawed, only that they are an ill fit. Newsom’s project will examine the conceptual and imaginative constructions of good and evil in these contrasting positions. It will also indicate the similarities among these constructions and the framing of issues of good and evil in contemporary investigations in theology, philosophy, cultural studies, social science, and evolutionary biology.

### **Kathryn Tanner**

University of Chicago Divinity School  
*Grace and Gambling*

Theologian Kathryn Tanner poses the question of how fundamental Christian beliefs and commitments might provide a critical perspective on the present financial crisis. Her project answers this question by continuing the line of argument begun in her previous book, *Economy of Grace* (Fortress, 2005). That book interpreted basic Christian beliefs in economic terms, so that the whole Christian story of creation, fall, and redemption becomes a systematic vision of economic life under divine direction—a story about God’s intentions regarding the production, distribution, and circulation of goods. The principles that govern this theologically informed economic vision, she argued, are quite unusual; and, therefore, this economic vision has the potential both to expand our economic imagination and to suggest practical paths for change in trying times. Tanner asserts that one can understand the commitment to a Christian way of life as a kind of wager or bet, one whose unusual features have the potential to criticize the forms of risk taking that have increasingly come to characterize economic life under the sway of volatile financial markets. ♦



Mary Clark Moschella



Carol A. Newsom



Kathryn Tanner

# Board of Commissioners February meeting report

The ATS Board of Commissioners met at the ATS office February 1–3, 2010.

## The Board considered reports from evaluation committees for the following schools:

Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, MO  
 Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax, NS  
 Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius, Pittsburgh, PA  
 Dominican Study Center of the Caribbean, Bayamon, PR  
 Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, VA  
 Erskine Theological Seminary, Due West, SC  
 Franciscan School of Theology, Berkeley, CA  
 Houston Graduate School of Theology, Houston, TX  
 Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, Berkeley, CA  
 Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, SK  
 McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, ON  
 Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Dyer, IN  
 Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lombard, IL  
 Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans, LA  
 Sacred Heart School of Theology, Hales Corners, WI  
 Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry, Seattle, WA  
 Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, MI  
 St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, South Canaan, PA  
 Starr King School for the Ministry, Berkeley, CA  
 Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

## The Board considered petitions for new or revised degree programs, changes in degree programs or nomenclature, and other petitions regarding course-offering sites, distance and extension programs, and removal of notations from the following schools:

Alliance Theological Seminary, Nyack, NY  
 Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, OH  
 Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN  
 Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Richmond, VA  
 Bethel Seminary of Bethel University, St. Paul, MN  
 Bexley Hall Seminary, Columbus, OH  
 Carey Theological College, Vancouver, BC  
 Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, IL  
 Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Shawnee, KS  
 Church of God Theological Seminary, Cleveland, TN  
 Cincinnati Bible Seminary, Cincinnati, OH  
 Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, CA  
 Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA  
 Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX  
 Florida Center for Theological Studies, Miami, FL  
 Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, IL

George Fox Evangelical Seminary, Portland, OR  
 George W. Truett Theological Seminary of Baylor University, Waco, TX  
 Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, CA  
 Haggard Graduate School of Theology, Azusa, CA  
 Houston Graduate School of Theology, Houston, TX  
 Lexington Theological Seminary, Lexington, KY  
 Logos Evangelical Seminary, El Monte, CA  
 Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA  
 McGill University Faculty of Religious Studies, Montreal, QC  
 Meadville Lombard Theological School, Chicago, IL  
 Michigan Theological Seminary, Plymouth, MI  
 Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO  
 Montreal School of Theology, Montreal, QC  
 New York Theological Seminary, New York, NY  
 Northeastern Seminary at Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, NY  
 Saint Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, MO  
 Saint Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, PA  
 Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, MI  
 Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC  
 Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX  
 St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, NY  
 Taylor University College and Seminary, Edmonton, AB  
 Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL  
 Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH  
 Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, Richmond, VA  
 United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH  
 United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, New Brighton, MN  
 University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA  
 Washington Baptist Theological Seminary of Washington Baptist University, Annandale, VA  
 Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC  
 Western Seminary, Portland, OR  
 Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA  
 Wycliffe College, Toronto, ON

## The Board acted on reports received from the following member schools:

Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX  
 Ambrose Seminary of Ambrose University College, Calgary, AB  
 American Baptist Seminary of the West, Berkeley, CA  
 Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, MA  
 Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, MO  
 Bangor Theological Seminary, Bangor, ME  
 Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary, Jacksonville, TX  
 Barry University Department of Theology and Philosophy, Miami Shores, FL

Blessed John XXIII National Seminary, Weston, MA  
 Boston University School of Theology, Boston, MA  
 Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI  
 Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary, Cochrane, AB  
 Catholic University of America School of Theology and Religious Studies, Washington, DC  
 Chapman Seminary, Oakland City, IN  
 Cincinnati Bible Seminary, Cincinnati, OH  
 Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO  
 Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO  
 Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC  
 Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO  
 Emmanuel School of Religion, Johnson City, TN  
 Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA  
 Erskine Theological Seminary, Due West, SC  
 Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA  
 General Theological Seminary, New York, NY  
 Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, CA  
 Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA  
 Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO  
 Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, GA  
 International Theological Seminary, El Monte, CA  
 Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, St. Louis, MO  
 Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY  
 Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, IL  
 McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL  
 Memphis Theological Seminary, Memphis, TN  
 Michigan Theological Seminary, Plymouth, MI  
 Multnomah Biblical Seminary, Portland, OR  
 Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO  
 Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lombard, IL  
 Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, TX  
 Payne Theological Seminary, Wilberforce, OH  
 Providence Theological Seminary, Otterburne, MB  
 Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS  
 Regent University School of Divinity, Virginia Beach, VA  
 Saint Meinrad School of Theology, St. Meinrad, IN  
 Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology, Richmond, VA  
 Sioux Falls Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC  
 Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY  
 St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Wynnewood, PA  
 St. John's University School of Theology–Seminary, Collegeville, MN  
 Union/PSCE, Richmond, VA  
 United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, New Brighton, MN  
 University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA  
 University of St. Michael's College Faculty of Theology, Toronto, ON  
 University of St. Thomas School of Theology, Houston, TX  
 Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA  
 Ecumenical Theological Seminary, Detroit, MI

# DIRECT LOAN

The recently enacted U.S. federal legislation has made significant changes in federal student aid programs including those used by many ATS-related schools. Among the changes, which are effective July 1, 2010, is moving all aid programs into the government-operated Direct Loan structure. Individual schools that have been using guaranty agencies and private lenders will need to make a change to the Direct Loan program. Information regarding the program is available at <http://www2.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DirectLoan/index.html>.

## Commission on Accrediting invites third-party comments

The following member schools are receiving comprehensive evaluation committee visits during the fall semester:

Acadia Divinity College  
Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary  
Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary  
Ecumenical Theological Seminary  
Florida Center for Theological Studies  
Heritage Theological Seminary  
Hazelip School of Theology  
Knox Theological Seminary  
Logsdon Seminary of Logsdon School of Theology  
Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary  
Nazarene Theological Seminary  
Queen's College Faculty of Theology  
Saint Francis Seminary  
St. John's Seminary (CA)  
St. John's Seminary (MA)  
SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary  
Wesley Theological Seminary

The ATS Commission on Accrediting invites any member school to submit third-party comments on any school scheduled to receive a visit. Comments should be addressed to the attention of the Commission on Accrediting and sent by mail, fax, or email to Susan Beckerdite, [beckerdite@ats.edu](mailto:beckerdite@ats.edu) by September 1. ♦

Petitions to the ATS Board of Commissioners must be received by **April 1** for consideration in its spring meeting and by **November 1** for consideration in its winter meeting.

## MACLEOD ENDNOTES continued from page 7

### ENDNOTES

1. Jerome Bruner, *The Culture of Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), xi-xii, 3.
2. Linda M. Cannell, "A Review of Literature on Distance Education," *Theological Education* 36, no. 1 (Autumn 1999): 1-72.
3. Jan Herrington and Ron Oliver, "Critical Characteristics of Situated Learning: Implications for the Instructional Design of Multimedia," <http://methodenpool.uni-koeln.de/situiereteslernen/herrington.pdf> (accessed March 18, 2010).
4. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
5. Grant P. Wiggins, *Educative Assessment: Designing Assessments to Inform and Improve Student Performance* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998).
6. John Palfrey and Urs Gasser, *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives* (New York: Basic Books, 2008). Craig S. Watkins, *The Young and the Digital: What the Migration to Social-Network Sites, Games, and Anytime, Anywhere Media Means for Our Future* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2009).
7. Henry Jenkins, *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).
8. Chris Dede, "Reinventing the Role of Information and Communications Technologies in Education," *2007 Yearbook-National Society for the Study of Education* (2007).
9. Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider* (New York: Penguin Group, 2006).
10. Dede, "Reinventing the Role." Howard Gardner, *Five Minds for the Future* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2008).
11. Chris Dede, "Planning for Neomillennial Learning Styles: Implications for Investments in Technology and Faculty," in *Educating the Net Generation*, ed. Diana G. Oblinger and James L. Oblinger (Boulder, CO: Educause, 2005), [www.educause.edu/educatingthenetgen/](http://www.educause.edu/educatingthenetgen/) (accessed March 18, 2010).

Remember that Degree Program Standards require that schools measure the percent of graduates who find placement appropriate to their vocational intentions.

The Association of Theological Schools  
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Those attending the Chief Academic Officers Seminar, June 22, and the Biennial Meeting, June 23–25, should ensure they have a current passport if their travel requires a border crossing between the United States and Canada.