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Building Theological Faculties of the Future

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

Gail Buchwalter King

Based on the presupposition that theological education will need to be a different enterprise in the future from what it has been in the past, approximately 115 academic deans convened for a consultation on “Building Theological Faculties of the Future” on March 1-3, 1991, in Chicago, Illinois. This event was sponsored by the Council on Theological Scholarship and Research in cooperation with the Issues Research Advisory Committee. The overall concern of the consultation was to ask whether, or to what extent, persons currently being prepared to be theological educators give promise of being able to conduct the research, scholarship and other responsibilities that theological education of the future is going to need.

Presenters and participants alike discussed the following more specific questions:

What capabilities and commitments will be needed in theological educators of the future including those related to research and scholarship?

Are graduate schools currently providing as many persons with these capabilities and commitments as are required?

If they are, what forms of instruction, training, and formation appear to be responsible for this, and, therefore, need to be continued?

If they are not, what forms of instruction, training, and formation can and should be instituted so as to insure the preparation of more persons who are so capable and committed?

This volume contains some, but not all, of the papers presented at this consultation. Readers will find the topics addressed to be important to the entire profession. The introduction is by Joseph C. Hough, Jr., who served as overall convener of the consultation.

In addition, the keynote address given by Craig Dykstra at the Development and Institutional Advancement Program on “Building the Development Team” in Pittsburgh on April 21-24, 1991 is included because of its significance to the DIAP constituency and to theological education as a whole.

INTRODUCTION: WHO SHALL TEACH IN A THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL?

Joseph C. Hough, Jr.

Several years ago, I met with a group of deans of theological schools at the Lilly Endowment to discuss our responsibility for nurturing faculty research. After dinner one evening, we began to share some ideas about the criteria for recruiting faculty for a theological school. We were concerned that many of the young prospects graduating from our finest graduate programs in religion simply did not seem to be very “theological.” As I remembered it, that conversation was not remarkable for its clarity about what we hoped to discover that could assure us that the candidates were “theological,” but the worry was widely enough shared that the concern seemed to point to something very important about those whom we wish to recruit to teach in theological schools.

David Kelsey, in his article, “Conjuring Future Faculties” indicates that the sorts of criteria we articulate individually and corporately are really the same ones we have talked about for a number of years. We have long discussed the importance of overcoming the theory/practice dichotomy, the necessity for pluralism and diversity, the need for theological faculty who can be mentors, persons who can meet all of the university standards for excellence in teaching and research. But, Kelsey argues, we too quickly move from these problems to concrete prescriptions or moralistic exhortation without attending to the need for careful analysis. I agree, but at some point we need to come to terms with the implications of our basic analysis. As Barbara Wheeler and David Kelsey point out in their article which appears in this issue, we now have behind us nearly a decade of discussions on basic issues and a number of books on theological education which have been published since Edward Farley’s *Theologia* appeared in 1983. What I wish to do is to pursue the question that Wheeler and Kelsey raise, namely, what will the analysis of the basic issue, “what is ‘theological’ about theological education?” yield for our thinking about building theological faculties for the future.

The beginnings of the current round of conversations on theological education consisted of attempts by several of us to state a principle or principles of unity for theological studies. The first attempt by Edward Farley proposed that the nature and unity of theological education was to be discovered in the nature of the subject matter itself, namely a course of study, the object of which is the knowledge of God; a course of study which leads to “sapiential wisdom” or the disposition of the soul toward the things of God. This is not to say, of course, that one can teach wisdom as such. It is rather, in Farley’s case, an argument that no set of scientific

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approaches to knowledge, even ones that deal with texts, doctrines, etc. can constitute education that is theological. That becomes a possibility only as the result of disciplined inquiry focused on questions about how a Christian situates herself in the world, how she is formed by the Christian tradition in such a way that the normal practices of living in the world provoke at all times the question about how one lives *as a Christian* in the world with integrity. If this is true, theological educators have a twofold obligation. First they must be sure that their teaching, whatever their specialty or “discipline,” will engage students in the careful and critical study of the tradition and their world historical context with a view to understanding how the object of study is related to the pursuit of sapiential wisdom. That is, *theological* teaching, whatever its immediate subject matter, will always be attentive to the question about who we are and how we live if we are, in our heart of hearts, disposed to order our lives to the knowledge and wisdom of God. Second, theological teaching will always also be attentive to the possibility of living a life ordered by the knowledge and wisdom of God in a particular concrete world historical context.

In Farley’s terms, theological teaching will have as its aim the development of a Christian *habitus*, the habit of making judgments about life, death and community that are grounded in a fundamental understanding of what it is to be Christian here and now. That is the meaning of sapiential wisdom.

The latest contribution to the discussion is contained in a forthcoming book by David Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly*. Kelsey’s proposal for a theological understanding of theological education is similar to Farley’s contribution in many respects. For Kelsey, theological education is a course of study, the aim of which is to develop the capacity to understand God more truly. In the context of Christian theological studies, understanding God more truly is always understanding God more truly in Jesus’ name. That is, the pursuit of understanding involves attention to what Kelsey calls, “the Christian thing.”

But what is “the Christian thing?” Here Kelsey becomes much more concrete than Farley. The Christian thing is available in our culture only in the practices of Christian congregations. Therefore, theological education will focus on the acquisition of a clear understanding of what is going on in the practices of Christian congregations. It is, therefore, education *about* the congregations whose practices are accessible to us. However, the aim of theological education is not simply to gain information about what is going on in these congregations, it is to develop the capacity to make judgments about the truth or falsity of understandings that undergird the practices of congregations as well as to assess the adequacy or inadequacy of judgments about practices that are chosen to embody these understandings. However, Kelsey says that his proposal is clearly not a case for making congregations “...the sole subject matter within a theological school. Rather

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it is to suggest a horizon of questions within which every subject matter is to be studied.” Thus while theological education is certainly *about congregations*, one discovers that the actual subject matters to be studied in the curriculum are quite familiar--history, Bible, theology, ethics and the like. Nonetheless, these familiar subjects will be studied with a view to determining the role of any subject matter studied in the life of the congregation. Such study will also have a critical function. Theological education will, therefore, not just be *for* the congregations. It will also be *against* them. In fact, it cannot be truly *for* the congregations unless it is also *against* them because the possibility of enriching and broadening congregational practice is related to the capacity for transformation. And transformation requires criticism. In this way, not only will theological education develop understanding of what the practices of the church are and how they are grounded in certain understandings of the Christian thing, but will also enhance the critical capacity of the students to assist the congregations in their ongoing struggle to bear witness to their understanding of God in Jesus’ name. Thus, while the proximate goal of theological education is to increase the students’ capacities for making judgments about the practices of congregations, its final aim is to assist the students in their development of the capacity to understand God more truly. Only as they understand God more truly can they develop the capacity, much less the habit, of making judgments about the truth or falsity, the adequacy or inadequacy of congregational practices.

Both Farley and Kelsey, then, are concerned about the formation character of the students so that their own lives will manifest the understanding of and pursuit of the saving wisdom mediated by the Christian community based on its understanding of the things of God. In Kelsey’s formulation, it is, the “capacitating” of students to make judgments and also the development of the habit of making judgments about the “Christian thing”. Barring total cynicism about the persuasive power of the “Christian thing”, presumably the development of such habits, will also “form” occasional students in the Christian thing, though Kelsey insists that this sort of personal commitment is not a necessary outcome of theological education nor is it a necessary prerequisite for teachers in a course of theological studies. What it will do is develop in persons a habitual interest in the sorts of studies that will develop capacities for making judgements about what it is to understand God more truly in Jesus’ name.

Given these brief summaries of Farley and Kelsey, the question I wish to raise is “who will teach theological studies?” In one sense, the answer to that is anyone who has the capacity to assist persons in their struggle to understand God more truly in Jesus’ name or to develop a disposition of the soul toward the things

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of God. That means that any person who habitually gives attention to the “Christian thing” may serve as a teacher in some sense. Indeed, they do. Most of the teaching in the congregations is done by persons who have no advanced degrees in theological studies or any degrees at all for that matter. Some theological education can go on in the homes of faithful Christians, in Sunday School classes, in informal circles of believers who seriously explore together the adequacy of practices in the congregations or their own Christian praxis. It might even take place on occasion, as Kelsey suggests, in college and university departments of religion, or in departments of philosophy, though theological education as such is certainly not at the center of the pedagogical intentionality of most college religion and philosophy departments.

Theological education in all of these settings may be done well or badly. But theological education in all of these locations is not really the focus of the problem. What was at issue in the discussion before us in the 1991 consultation was the question about who will teach in a school dedicated to the education of leaders in religious institutions. Even more specifically, in spite of all the disclaimers of the “clerical paradigm,” the real issue for most of us is *who will teach the future ministerial leaders in the congregations?*

Our history suggests that the answer to that question might go in several directions. Since Kelsey and Farley both suggest that theological education need not be defined in terms of what goes on in theological schools, we might phrase the question in terms of the most appropriate *location* for the education of ministerial leaders. If, following Kelsey, one argued that the appropriate horizon for theological education is the practices of worshipping congregations, a case could be made for a decisive shift of major segments of the education of ministerial leaders to the location of actual working and teaching congregations. This might be even more true if one followed James Hopewell’s suggestion that the aim of theological education should be the health of the congregation rather than the formation of the minister.

But let us suppose that we frame the issue in another way. By what criterion shall we select the persons who will teach in the theological school itself? If, as most all of us who have written on the subject recently agree, the theological school should be a school of advanced studies of the Christian thing, then we would expect that all teachers in the theological school must have the requisite characteristics for teaching in a school of advanced studies. However, if the advanced study of the Christian thing is understood in the manner that Farley and Kelsey have suggested, then should all of those who are teachers be believers in the Christian thing and/or participants in the life of a congregation? Kelsey says that this is not implied by his focus on the Christian thing concretely manifest in the practices of believing and

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worshipping communities. I think that Farley would be reluctant to make any sort of confession of Christian faith or participation in a congregation of believers a criterion for membership in a faculty of theology as well. On the other hand, both of them argue that the teachers in theological education must have a passionate interest in the subject matter of theological education. This means that a church historian, for example, in a theological school ought to be willing to approach the subject matter (in Kelsey's case) with at least the willingness to probe the practices of the churches in history with a view to criticism and reconstruction of current congregational practices. In Farley's case, it would be necessary for the historian to focus on the way in which his or her subject matter can be read in such a way as to support the development of a Christian *habitus*. That is, the difference between teaching in a theological school and a graduate department of religion or a history department might be the requirement that the "interest" of the teacher be clearly focused in the quest for understanding the things of God. Then, even if the teacher is not a believer, she or he must at least be willing to engage in serious attention to congregations "as if" she were a believer (Kelsey) or be passionately interested in the development and pursuit of sapiential wisdom (Farley). In either case, some criterion other than competence in a single traditional discipline of studies must be applied to those who will be chosen to teach in a theological school that educates ministers for religious congregations. On the one hand, Farley seems to ask that the theological educator be prepared to be a mentor to students as they are led by him or her in the development of a Christian *habitus*. Kelsey suggests concentration of all of one's study and teaching on the "Christian thing" as manifest in the life and practice of Christian congregations. Thus, it is clear that once we press our analysis of what is theological about theological education, we inevitably are led to suggest that there are special non-academic qualifications necessary for those who will teach in a theological school.

Those of us at that deans' conversation were not very clear on what we meant, but we sensed what careful analysis by Kelsey and Farley has shown to be the case. To be "theological" and hence to qualify for a position as a teacher in a theological school certainly involves something more than a graduate degree in religious studies signifying competence in a discipline that is one of the historic "sciences" of theology. In addition, if we are to have theological education that is truly "theological," then we must bring together teachers who at least have an abiding personal and scholarly interest in assisting those who are in the process of developing a life that is disposed to think about God and the ways in which the truth of God is manifest in the concrete world historical situation of believing communities.

THINKING ABOUT THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: THE IMPLICATIONS OF “ISSUES RESEARCH” FOR CRITERIA OF FACULTY EXCELLENCE

David H. Kelsey and Barbara G. Wheeler

Our assignment is to describe current thinking about theological education. We have been asked to perform this function because, for most of the last decade, we have worked as evaluators of various programs sponsored by the Association of Theological Schools and the Lilly Endowment that have produced a sizable wave of writing and public discussion about theological education, work that forms an important conceptual backdrop for this conference. First we shall characterize very briefly the literature and discussions of the last ten years and say what we think has been most notable about them; then we shall explore the specific implications of this writing and discussion specifically as it relates to theological faculties.

When we were first asked to serve as observers of Lilly and ATS programs, we were already veterans of the usual sort of debates about theological education, the kind that take place regularly in faculty meetings and from time to time in church assemblies as well. We had participated in long, never-resolved arguments about how theory should be related to practice, about how the work of the various departments can be integrated, and about whether our graduates are adequately prepared for ministry. We had seen faculty committees on educational reform break apart along field and disciplinary lines, often into parties that came to think of themselves as “academic” or “practical” in orientation. And we had heard some of our faculty colleagues shrug off the whole project of discussing and revising the curriculum as an exercise in public relations, an administrative device to pacify students and outside constituencies.

We suspect that our experiences are fairly typical: When theological educators turn their attention to their own work, they fall into these predictable patterns of discourse and behavior, which—repeated over and over—give talk about theological education a reputation for being tedious that it usually deserves. Eventually, even the prospect of engaging in such discussions yet again makes us tired. We know a small child who once went on strike, refusing to accompany his parents into any retail establishment offering clothes, housewares or postal supplies. He gave all such places the same name, “yawn stores,” because he said they all made him uncontrollably drowsy the moment he got inside. Frankly, when we began in 1981 our project of evaluating programs whose purpose was to cultivate writing and create discussion about theological education, we felt in anticipation some of that heaviness behind the eyes that the child identified. So much conversation about

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theological education has been so soporific that we found it impossible to set our expectations for these new programs very high.

But we were surprised—positively, and pleasantly surprised. Simply the amount of activity since 1982 has been surprising: several dozen books and articles on the nature and purpose of theological education and about what have come to be called “basic issues” in theological education, plus an almost equal number of essays and reports on more specific policy questions and institutional topics, and on top of all that writing; workshops, consultations and seminars, some large and bi-national, some regional meetings, some on particular campuses. This volume is all the more impressive because it brings to an end an interval, more than two decades since the publication of the study by H. Richard Niebuhr, James Gustafson and Daniel Day Williams, during which very little was written about theological education except committee reports. Even more surprising than the amount of publication and discussion, however, is its quality and freshness. Both the literature and the programs organized around it have taken different forms and produced a far more exciting and original body of ideas and perspectives than we, and we would guess anyone else, might have expected.

The question of why the discussion about theological education has so quickly become lively and vivid and different is a matter for historians to take up at a greater distance. From this vantage point, one can see that two major supporting organizations, the ATS and the Lilly Endowment, have given the writing and discussion a powerful boost. But foundations and associations cannot create either new ideas or openness to them. “If the people won’t come,” said movie mogul Sam Goldwyn, “you can’t stop them.” We suspect that diversity—both the increasingly rich mixture of religious traditions in the community of accredited theological schools and the increasing diversity of gender, race, ethnicity and class within theological schools—has played a large role, shaking some conventional ways of talking about theological education loose from their moorings and rendering some sturdy old platitudes unusable. Luck has also been a factor. As it happened, some of the first contributions to this new discussion were of extraordinarily high quality. Fine work at the start often builds a tradition of fine work to follow, and that seems to be what has happened here.

Though we cannot establish with certainty why the discussion about theological education has so markedly improved, we can take note of some of its remarkable features. Our list includes both matters of form in terms of its participants, activities, and theological character and matters of substance in terms of challenging conventional assumptions about the tasks of theological education.

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Thinking about Theological Education: Changes in Form

Perhaps the most striking formal feature of the last decade of activity has been the participants; most of the writers and most of the discussants have been faculty members. Such broad faculty participation in national debates about theological education is a new development. Until this decade, almost all the public discussion was conducted by presidents and deans. Even within schools, as I noted before, substantial numbers of faculty members have resisted administrative attempts to involve them in discussion about their common educational tasks. Thus the fact that the programs and activities that have come to be called “issues research” (a term coined by ATS to refer to both the writing and discussion of the last decade regardless of sponsor) have been faculty centered is news and has important implications for the future. If faculty members continue to become engaged in the national discussion in significant numbers, perhaps they will bring back to their home institutions some of the excitement, critical self-consciousness and rigor in thinking about theological education that have marked the larger discussions but that school-based debates have frequently lacked.

The second surprising and impressive feature of the form that issue research activities have taken is related to the large role that faculty have played in those activities: the books, articles, conferences and seminars that comprise issues research have been distinctively *scholarly* in approach. This too is a major departure from past practice. It has not been our habit in North America to treat the topic of theological education as deserving the sort of painstaking scholarship that so many other topics and subjects have enjoyed. In the 1960s and 1970s, for instance, we engaged in extended debates about whether theological education should be reshaped as more explicitly professional education. But at no point, in all of our wrestling with that issue, did we commission anyone to sort out all the different conceptual and historical strands that have been tangled in the term professional. Nor was such clarification volunteered. As a result, our discourse on professional education took on a highly polemical tone and many of our documents on the subject, revisited twenty years later, read more like declarations and manifestos than carefully nuanced arguments. This is just one of many examples of our past failure to provide scholarly grounding for our debates about theological education. The failure is ironic. We have long insisted that our students recognize that scholarship is an indispensable resource for the responsible practice of ministry, but we have often failed to claim that same resource when we write and talk about our own practice of theological education.

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The issues research program of ATS and some closely associated projects are repairing this deficiency at an impressive rate. In the last decade, several superb histories of individual seminaries have been published, and the first general histories of theological education ever to be written have appeared. Major monographs by Edward Farley, Joseph Hough and John Cobb, Charles Wood, Max Stackhouse, Katarina Schuth and a feminist group called the Mud Flower Collective, have sorted concepts in careful, helpful and scholarly ways. Week-long summer seminars, whose papers are available in special issues of the journal *Theological Education*, have attempted to define terms and to explore what is at stake in some crucial questions before us: how we should respond to pluralism, whether theological education should seek to form character and spirit, how to deal with the tension between the often opposed values of critical disinterest and advocacy for what we believe. This work, both writing and discussion, has been of high quality, and there has been, as we noted before, a lot of it. It should be a point of pride, as we look back on this decade, that North American theological educators have come so far in establishing a new scholarly tradition that focuses on their own practice.

The third distinctive feature of issues research is its theological character. Yet again, this feature makes the work of the last ten years very different from what went before. We North Americans have never been participants in the long European tradition of arguing on theological grounds about how theological schools should define their mission, what should be included in the course of theological studies, and how those studies should be organized. We have from time to time had public theological wrangles about theological education, in fact, some very noisy ones, but these have centered not on the theological rationale for a particular program of studies but rather on the theological orthodoxy of those who will be permitted to teach. More frequently, however, North Americans have conceived theological education not as a theological problem at all, but as a matter of practical application and technique. Our attention has been focused not on the theological grounds and reasons for doing what we do, but on questions of how to do it effectively.

The authors and discussants who have contributed to issues research do not view theological education as that kind of technical problem. Diverse as these contributors are, they all regard theological education as a form of Christian practice, and they all insist that the question of what we should do in theological education receive the same kind of careful theological consideration that we give to other important questions of practice, such as how we as Christians should worship,

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and what should be our ministry of service and advocacy in the world. As a result, the recent literature has taken the shape of something we have never had before, a practical theology of theological education, and the shift that that represents, from narrowly technical questions about how to be effective to practical and theological ones about what form our witness as theological educators should take, is a major contribution that could, if it continues to develop, make a signal difference in the depth of our reflection on our own work.

Thinking About Theological Education: Changes in Direction

Even more surprising than these formal changes (the involvement of faculty, the newly scholarly approach, and the new theological mode of the conversation) have been the substantive directions of the writing and discussion. In the quarter century after H. Richard Niebuhr's work and before this new round of writing, the debate about theological education, inconclusive and often tedious as it was, at least had a focus of sorts, a focus created by a fairly broad agreement about which were the most important problems for theological education to solve. The problems were, as it happens, precisely those intractable puzzles that made us so weary of theological education discussions. If we could not keep ourselves interested in the discussions, however, we could at least agree about the seriousness of the problems. The course of theological studies does not adequately integrate the disciplines of theological inquiry; it further fails to present theory in ways that make practice more effective; and the result of these two serious failures is a more comprehensive one: The basic purpose of theological education, to prepare people to fill competently the functions of ministry, is not often enough or fully enough achieved. The surprising substantive contribution of the last decade's writing on theological education has been to challenge our almost unanimous conviction that these are the problems we should be struggling to solve. Indeed, the literature strongly suggests that our preoccupation with problems is a problem in itself, for it masks much more fundamental difficulties that underlie all of them.

What are these problems that are more fundamental than the integration of the disciplines, the relation of theory and practice and the adequacy of preparation for ministry, which we have long thought the most difficult problems we face? In *Theologia*, the first volume to appear in the recent series of writings, Edward Farley argues that our most fundamental problem—he calls it a crisis—arises from that fact that the generic structure of studies that is now shared by North American

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theological schools across the range of Christian traditions, the structure that holds most of our educational practices and ideas in place, is incoherent.

Farley reaches this conclusion from a historical account of how the present structure came into being. In the late medieval and early Reformation periods, theology was conceived in a unified way, as a habitus, a wisdom that disposes the knower to God. This unified theology had divisions or literatures—scripture, doctrine, the history of God’s work in the church and polemics against error, but all were aspects of a single thing, theology. In subsequent centuries this unified notion of theology as sapiential knowing was eroded, and it lost its power to unify its internal divisions. The divisions themselves, however, have remained in place, over time taking on new and highly disparate functions and meanings. The late Reformation contributed an arrangement for these separate divisions that reflected ideas about religious authority and knowledge that reigned at the time: Scripture first, its exposition as theological teachings, and then the application of those teachings to life. The arrangement is still with us today, despite the fact that the notions of authority and knowledge that hold it in place have been greatly revised and in some cases discarded. The late Enlightenment transformed the divisions of study into modern academic disciplines. They continue to function that way, despite the fact that many of us deplore the fragmentation and hyperspecialization that has been the result. Schleiermacher proposed a new way to state the purpose of theological study that would justify its presence in the modern university: It prepares professional leaders for the churches, which are socially significant institutions. This professional orientation of the whole program of study is now almost universally accepted, despite the enormous confusion it has created about what the various disciplines of study have to do with preparation for practice. And we North Americans have made our own contribution: an image of practice as the collection of jobs or functions that the clergy carry out. This is the image that now regulates practical and ministry studies, with its many sub-disciplines, despite the deep doubts many have expressed about the individualism and technocracy that this conception of practice seems to support.

These developments, piled on one another over time, have left a highly problematic legacy, a crazy-quilt pattern of studies which has no internal order and for which no compelling rationale can be constructed, because the pattern is simply an aggregate of forms and ideas from the distant and recent past, fit into a structure, the four-fold division, whose principles of unity ceased to have power for us a long time ago. Even without a persuasive set of reasons for studying these things, to this

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end, in this order, rather than other things, to other ends, in some other order, however, the inherited pattern of studies is a heavy weight that holds in place many features of and ideas about theological education, whether or not we like them and want to keep them in their present form. The contradiction involved here—the practice of theological education is regulated by a pattern of studies for which we can produce no satisfactory intellectual explanation—is, Farley maintains, our fundamental problem, a problem so serious that it amounts to a crisis.

Most other recent writers on theological education substantially agree with Farley that the ways that theological education is oriented and ordered make no coherent sense. Further, they join him in pointing out that the problems we have been occupied with are grounded in some assumptions that no longer seem safe in light of Farley's account. These assumptions, which amount to a sort of conventional wisdom about theological education, have to do, like the problems they undergird, with its basic features: its goal, its structure and its movement. The challenges to our conventional assumptions about these things have been vigorous. More than anything else, these challenges are what surprised us about the recent literature and discussions and what promises to keep theological educators awake during the next decade of conversation about theological education.

The first sharp challenge has been to our standard assumption about the overarching and governing goal of theological education. By and large, the conventional wisdom has it that the goal of a theological education is to prepare people to fill competently the functions of the clergy. That goal is stated explicitly in many seminary catalogs and it functions even more widely as the assumption behind the traditional problem of how the whole of a theological education can equip people for more effective ministry practice. But these writers, newly aware that the functions of ministry practice became the goal of theological study only recently, have consistently called this assumption into question. The writers recognize of course that most students in theological schools are planning to serve the church in professional roles, and none of the writers is opposed to competence in the clergy. What they do oppose is using a functionalist understanding of church leadership as the organizing principle of theological education, as the criterion for deciding what gets studied and in what order. Among other arguments, they advance the contention that functionalist education simply does not work. Their underlying point here seems analogous to the classic paradox about happiness: The more directly you pursue happiness as the goal of life, the less likely you are to become happy. Similarly, the more directly we pursue the goal of cultivating competence to

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fill the functions of church leadership, the less likely we are to prepare people to be competent leaders of churches over the long haul.

Therefore, many recent writers suggest, an alternative approach is required: Rather than defining the overarching goal of theological education by reference to the functions clergy fill, they say, it should be defined as it was before the functionalist addition, by reference to theology. In the interim, however, theology has changed, becoming a specialized discipline. For it again to serve as the goal and glue and reference point of the whole pattern of studies, it will have to be massively reconceived. Several of the recent writers have called for this and have offered proposals for what theology as a broad, inclusive enterprise would look like. These proposals are diverse, but most of the writers converge at one point: *theological formation* rather than preparation for the functions of ministry should be the central, defining task of theological education.

Recent writers also challenge our conventional assumption that the movement in theological education is from theory to application in practice. That theory *should* provide foundations and direction for practice is, of course, what we assume when we struggle with the traditional problem of how we can make the theory of the so-called academic disciplines more relevant for application in the so-called practical ones. Challenges to the conventional wisdom on this score have come from two sides. Farley and other writers, such as Craig Dykstra, who have studied the history of ideas about practice and theory in theological education point out that our conceptions of both are so confused that the chances of relating the terms are slim. What, for instance, *is* theory in theological education? Is it the theoretical human sciences that support the specialized areas of ministry study, such as psychology, sociology, communications? Or is it everything that goes on in all the non-practical fields? Just what are we referring to when we say that theory should be related to practice? From another side, many writers find recent dynamic and interactive views of practice more appealing than the one-way theory-to-application model that theological education uses. For one or the other of these reasons, virtually all the authors agree that it is precisely our persistent use of the conventional pairs of contrast terms “theory/practice” and “academic/practical” to describe our problems that obfuscates what our problems really are and that makes them so intractable.

The third conventional assumption consistently challenged in the recent literature concerns the *structure* of theological education. This assumption, embedded in the traditional problem of how to integrate the disciplines, is that we

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have four disciplines (Scripture studies, historical studies, theological studies, and practical studies) that can be meshed because, presumably, they all contribute to the overarching goal of theological education, which is conventionally stated as preparing people to function as clergy. The areas correspond to the sorts of competencies future church leaders will require in order to carry out their functions. The literature rejects this view. Farley and others have produced convincing evidence that the pattern of studies and its divisions developed haphazardly. They were not devised to reach any one objective, and they are not parts of any larger whole. Therefore, contrary to the conventional wisdom, they are unlikely to be integrated, no matter how hard we struggle to do that.

What the field areas have become, recent authors have pointed out, are loose political confederacies among scholars who share a training in the same professional academic disciplines (such as history or philosophy or psychology) and share loyalties to the same professional academic guilds. The writing and discussion in this decade has raised forceful questions about whether these academic disciplines and guilds should continue to determine the structure of theological education. To permit this, say some authors, is to subvert the proper overarching goal of theological education, which is “to do theology.” Instead, the character of the goal ought to define the structure of theological education and bend the disciplines to its purposes. That will mean a smudging of what now seem self-evident lines between disciplines, a demand for scholars capable of a good deal more “inter-disciplinary” scholarship, and perhaps the invention of some new “disciplines.”

The writers and discussion participants of the last decade have accomplished a great deal by making us question our basic assumptions about what we are doing in theological education. They have woken us up, shaken us out of our complacency, and provided an alternative to the boredom and frustration we felt with the same old set of problems. But the writers have also left us a great deal to do: If we can no longer simply take for granted that the goal of theological education is training for clergy functions, that this can be accomplished by applying theory or theology in practice, and that the four-fold structure of disciplines is adequate to these ends, then we have a great deal to talk about in the next period. Some of this talk will be broad and general, about what the goal, movement and structure of theological education should be, if not what they have been. Some of it must be specific. We turn now to some such specific talk now, about how the topic of this consultation might be approached in light of these recent exciting and unsettling shifts in thinking about theological education.

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Changed Thinking and Criteria for Faculty

What do the past decade's discussions of theological education's basic issues imply regarding criteria of excellence for theological faculty? The question needs to be posed more exactly: What *sorts* of criteria of faculty excellence do the discussions imply? It is unrealistic to think that we could discover *particular* criteria of excellence applicable to all the different types of theological schools. What we can hope to find are sorts or classes of criteria that all schools need to apply in building future faculties.

Before turning to that, however, two parenthetical cautions are in order. First, we have noted three themes that emerge repeatedly in the issues research discussions and challenge conventional wisdom about theological education. The fact that these three themes recur often should not be understood as evidence that recent discussants and authors somehow represent a united front, a new school of thought about theological education. To the contrary, we want to stress how these three challenges to conventional wisdom do at the same time pose three major *open* questions. Each of them involves a question about the sort of excellence that should be exhibited by any one theological faculty member and by any one theological school faculty as a corporate whole. The suggestion is that debate of these open questions, especially as they bear on the criteria of excellence, may be more fruitful than debate of questions posed by conventional wisdom has proven to be.

The second caution is closely related to the first. The major question lying in the background of the discussions has been, "What's *theological* about theological education?" That meant that the discussions steadfastly have refused to address questions about what makes theological education good *education*, questions about how best to teach, how to do research, how to shape a school's common life, what the best polity is for a school, how to guarantee the school's continuing integrity, etc. Furthermore, as we have pointed out, for all their important disagreements the discussants and authors broadly agree that what makes a theological school "theological" is that it is a place where theology is "done" and where persons are capacitated to "do theology". The discussants widely disagree about what it is to "do theology," but they agree that whatever it is, it is the defining overarching goal of all else that a theological school does. Now the caution: That fact must not be misunderstood as evidence that these discussions are a power-play by the theologians among us to define theological education in their own image. The temptation to harbor that suspicion is understandable, since most of the authors are either systematic, philosophical or moral theologians! However, the basic point

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these discussants have been making is quite different. It is the claim that one of the roots of problems afflicting theological education is that we have allowed “theology” to become one academic specialization among many. Instead of that, “doing theology” needs to be reclaimed by all theological educators as their common task; theology is too important to be left to “professional” academic theologians alone.

Now to the task of teasing sorts of criteria of faculty excellence out of recent discussions of the nature and purpose of theological education. Perhaps the most efficient way to do this is to attend to each of the challenges to conventional wisdom just identified, note the open questions each raises, and explore what those questions may imply by way of criteria.

The first challenge to conventional wisdom, the challenge about the overall goal of theological education, poses at least these open questions: If the overarching goal that unifies theological education into a coherent project is understood to be “doing theology”, how should we define “doing theology”? It must be stressed that the discussants agree that theological education is the proper place in which to educate future church leadership, ordained and lay. What they also share is the conviction that theological education must not be defined by the overarching goal of preparing church leadership, or it will be unable to accomplish even that goal effectively. Rather, it should have “doing theology” as its goal. Now, by design that phrase is almost empty. It is used as a place holder that serves only to point to a topic to be debated: How shall we define “doing theology”? In particular, how shall we best describe the relation between “doing theology” and being prepared to provide competent church leadership? As is well known, Edward Farley and Charles Wood each urge that “doing theology” must not be defined by reference to clergy education, on pain of falling back into the paradox of preparing church leadership, while John Cobb and Joseph Hough insist that “theology” itself must be defined in terms of the practice (but not in terms of the “functions”) of church ministry, or else the task of doing theology will itself be misunderstood. In each case, however, the focus is the still open question, “What is properly theological (in contrast to “properly ministerial”) about theological education?”

What does this way of posing an open question imply about criteria of excellence in faculty? Insofar as “faculty excellence” is excellence in individual faculty members’ capacities for teaching and research in some particular academic discipline, it implies that “excellence” necessarily also includes highly developed capacities to “do theology” in and with the very process of teaching and doing research in their respective disciplines. What the “open question” raised by this theme leaves open here is just what it means to “do theology” *in and with* some academic discipline.

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There is considerable room for disagreement here. Consider two contrasting types of answer. One might suppose that a criterion of excellence in a given faculty member, say a historian, would be the highly developed capacity, having done a piece of historiographically disciplined research, to “go on” to explore relevant theological issues in the light of the research. In that case, what the proposed reformulation of the goal of theological education implies is an additional sort of criterion of excellence somehow added on to standard disciplinary criteria of excellence in the various academic fields.

By contrast, in a quite different vein, one might suppose that a criterion of excellence in that historian as a faculty member of a theological school would be the highly developed capacity to conduct her teaching and research in ways already theologically formed, that is, a capacity to select the agenda of problems on which to exercise her academic discipline and then pose the questions orienting her teaching and research in ways that are themselves theologically formed. In that case, what the proposed reformulation of the goal of theological education implies is not so much further criterion in addition to standard criteria of excellence but rather a capacity to put a distinctively theological “spin” on the way in which the standard disciplinary criteria of excellence are employed. Note that what is implied in this second case as a criterion of excellence is a capacity to do disciplined academic work in a way shaped by theological questions, not in a way shaped by defense of some particular theological answer or “position.”

The second challenge to conventional wisdom about theological education, the challenge to the conventional picture of the inherent *movement* of theological education, also opens a new question. We pointed out earlier that the issues research discussants have been virtually unanimous in challenging the picture of theological education as movement from theory to application. That simply opens the question: If not from theory to application, then just how is the movement of a theological course of study to be understood? Does “doing theology” entail some particular pattern of movement? About this question the conversation has been lively. Note, however, that it is not a discussion of the arrangement and rearrangement of courses, not a debate about curricular reform. Rather, it is a discussion at the most basic level of what it is to “do theology.” If theology is not “theory” subsequently to be applied to “practice”, then just how is “doing theology” related to “living”? Some, such as Cobb and Hough, say that this problem can be clarified by reconceiving the relation between “theory” and “practice” in a fresh way; others urge that it can be clarified only by abandoning the contrast “theory/practice” altogether and substituting another conceptual scheme.

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There has been broad consensus on two points, however. To state these points we are going to have to use two intentionally vague phrases as place holders, “doing theology”, whose vagueness has already been noted, and “living the faith”, which is, if anything, even vaguer. No matter, we need them only to hold open a conceptual space which various discussants will fill differently. The first point is that “living the faith” and “doing theology” must be seen much more tightly tied, more rooted dialectically each in the other than conventional wisdom has assumed. The second is that much more attention needs to be paid than conventional wisdom has paid to the differences made by the fact that “living the faith” concretely takes place in a variety of different socio-cultural locations. If “doing theology” is so tightly rooted in “living the faith”, then many aspects of “doing theology”—whatever we mean by that—will be done quite differently when rooted in “living the faith” in one social-cultural location than when rooted in “living the faith” in some other location.

What does this way of posing the open question about the movement of theological education imply regarding criteria of excellence in theological faculties? Insofar as “faculty excellence” means the excellence of a theological school’s faculty as a single body, it may imply that one sort of criteria of excellence is the variety of social and cultural locations for “living the faith” and “doing theology” that it includes in its membership. Insofar as “faculty excellence” means the excellence of individual faculty members, it implies that another sort of criteria of excellence is a faculty member’s capacity—as he “does theology” in and with his disciplined research and teaching—his capacity to keep his own “doing theology” clearly rooted in the *concrete* realities of “living the faith.” This raises the vexing and open question of whether the capacity to do this requires that the faculty member in fact be seriously engaged personally in “living the faith”, or whether the criterion could be met by a capacity of vividly imagining what is involved in “living the faith” in some particular social-cultural location and how that would shape one’s “doing theology.”

The third challenge to conventional wisdom about theological education, the challenge to the conventional picture of the *structure* of theological education, clearly poses one more open question: Just what structure for theological education does the goal of “doing theology” imply, and how does it relate to the academic areas and disciplines that now organize things? Some suggest that the goal of theological education, if properly understood, does not require us to change the table of disciplines as we know them, but that it does demand that the disciplines be put to work addressing specifically theological questions that they would not otherwise examine and, perhaps, cannot examine except in concert with other disciplines.

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Others hold that at least in principle a correct understanding of the goal of theological education dictates a thorough overhaul of the structure of academic disciplines we have inherited, even though the practicalities of the situation suggest that this would be very difficult to accomplish. In either case it is clear that here too the open question is, at bottom, “What is properly theological about theological education?” with the further addition of the question, “And what does that imply about the way theological study is organized?”

What does this way of posing the open question about the structure of theological education imply for the criteria of excellence in theological faculties? Insofar as “excellence” means the excellence of a theological school’s faculty in its internal inter-relatedness, it implies that one sort of criteria of excellence is the degree to which any given faculty is able—when actively “doing theology” in both teaching and research—to smudge what now seem self-evident lines between disciplines *without* loss to the relevant methodological rigor that makes their work genuinely critical work. This entails, furthermore, that an additional criterion of excellence in such a faculty is its ability to honor and reward such work.

Secondly, insofar as “excellence” means the excellence of individual members of a theological school faculty, it implies that another criterion of “excellence” is a scholar’s capacity to appropriate rigorously novel methods to discipline her research and teaching in service of “doing theology” in and with doing her research and teaching. In that way the disciplines might be bent to the larger service of “doing theology” rather than “doing theology” being constrained and formed by the agendas and privileged methodologies of the several professional academic disciplines.

We have been exploring what the recent issues research discussions about theological education may imply by way of the sorts of criteria of excellence that theological faculties ought to meet. One thing these reflections have underscored is the ambiguity of the phrase “excellence of theological faculties.” Repeatedly it has been necessary to distinguish among three ways in which the phrase “theological faculties” may be taken: a) distributively, as a collection of individuals; in that case the criteria in question are criteria of excellence in individual faculty members taken one by one; b) collectively, faculties as entire groups of faculty members; in that case the criteria in question are criteria of excellence in any one theological school’s faculty considered as a single body; and c) what we might term “systematically”, a theological school’s faculty taken as a set of scholars interacting regularly in intentionally planned ways in regard to their teaching and research; in that case the criteria in question are of excellence in interactions among the faculty.

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Correspondingly, different sorts of criteria of excellence come into view.

First, if by “theological faculty” we mean individual teachers and scholars, then clearly criteria of their excellence are their abilities to discipline their teaching and research by rigorous use of appropriate critical methodologies. If, further, we assess them in the light of the proposal that the overarching goal of theological education is to “do theology,” then another sort of criteria of their excellence is their ability to “do theology” in and with their practice of their critical academic disciplines in their teaching and research. If, moreover, we assess them in light of the recent discussions of the movement of theological education, then another sort of criteria of their excellence will be their ability to keep their “doing theology” clearly and explicitly rooted in some practice of “living the faith,” with self-conscious attention to its concrete historical and social location. If, furthermore, we assess them in light of recent discussions of the structure of theological education, then additional sorts of criteria of their excellence will be their ability to work in interdisciplinary fashion with teachers and scholars in other disciplines than their own, their openness and creativity in adapting novel disciplines in addressing their chosen subject matters, their ability to “bend” academic disciplines to the end of “doing theology” rather than allowing the established academic “disciplines” to define the ends to which they do their scholarly work in the context of a theological school.

Secondly, if we also take “theological faculties” collectively and assess them in the light of recent discussions of the movement of theological education, seeing them as collections of scholars “doing theology” in ways rooted in “living in the faith,” then a further sort of criteria of their excellence will be the degree to which each of these faculties as a collective body includes the variety of ways in which the “faith is lived” in concrete reality.

Finally, if we construe “theological faculties” systematically and assess them in the light of recent discussions of the structure of theological education, then yet another sort of criterion of their excellence will be the degree to which they so interact collegially in their teaching and research as a whole that they smudge the lines now conventionally imposed by disciplinary and “field” differences without loss of critical rigor.

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CONJURING FUTURE FACULTIES

David H. Kelsey

This essay moves from (dare it be claimed?) “objective” reporting of a consultation on “Building Theological Faculties of the Future,” through one person’s identification of major issues that seemed to recur in the consultation, to openly subjective speculations about why it is so difficult for us to consult together fruitfully about a major issue in the immediate future of theological education—an issue we all agree we face. This is not a digest of the several presentations made at the Consultation; by and large they are available elsewhere in this issue. Nor is it a “recall,” an interpretive summary of lines of argument moving back and forth between presentations and the discussions that followed them. You are, however, entitled to an honest advertisement of what it is: this mixed-genre piece moves from hard news through news analysis to the op-ed page.

I. Intent and Design

At the invitation of the Association of Theological Schools, roughly 120 presidents and deans of theological schools gathered March 1-3, 1991 for this Consultation sponsored jointly by two ATS bodies, the Council on Theological Scholarship and Research (CTSR) and the Issues Research Advisory Committee (IRAC). Intersections between the work of these two groups over the past half dozen years determined both the intent and the design of the Consultation. The *intent* was to foster reflection by theological school administrators about conceptual and theoretical issues that will be confronting theological schools in the next decade or decade-and-a-half as they build new faculties in the wake of anticipated high rates of retirement. It has proved, however, notoriously difficult to get a grip on relatively abstract issues about the future in such a way that the discussion does not feel so abstract or so speculative as to be unreal. Therefore, it seemed entirely appropriate that to accomplish its intent the Consultation should be rooted in several years’ work by two ATS agencies, work that might be relied on to have focused key issues and to have provided in some degree a shared framework for discussion.

The Consultation was *designed* to move discussion through an admirably logical process having six moments. First we needed to clarify what the criteria are by which faculties of the future ought to be assessed so that we have some idea what we are building *toward* as we “build faculties”. This is a topic rooted in a series of summer seminars, local symposia and the like that IRAC has sponsored. To that end Barbara Wheeler and I were asked to tease “criteria of excellence” out of recent

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discussions of the nature and purpose of theological education.

Next we needed to consider the process by which the teaching and research capacities of future faculties, once they are appointed, might best be developed. This is a topic that grows naturally out of CTSR's focus on teaching and research. Professor Jane Dempsey Douglass and Dean Thomas F. Gleeson explored ways in which faculty development is inescapably a responsibility shared by administration and faculty alike. They approached the topic by deliberate role-reversal, Douglass discussing the question from the perspective of an administrator and Gleeson from the perspective of a faculty member.

The third moment, to which the greatest amount of time was devoted, was to break the Consultation down into three smaller groups of about forty persons to explore in greater depth each of three topics: Faculty pluralism, faculty as mentors, faculty research and teaching. In every case discussion was to be provoked by two presentations from contrasting points of view. Judith Berling and Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. each made a proposal about "Pluralism as a Criteria [sic] of Excellence in Faculty Development." (Issues related to pluralism had frequently arisen in IRAC sponsored discussions.) Max L. Stackhouse and Frederick H. Borsch each reflected on "Faculty as Mentors and Models," Richard J. Mouw and Barbara Brown Zikmund made presentations on "Faculty as Scholars and Teachers." (Both of these last two topics had been central concerns of CTSR.) Provocative remarks were made in each of these presentations, and the intensity of the provocation is heightened when the two contrasting presentations on each topic are considered side-by-side.

The fourth moment in the movement given to the Consultation by its design focused on the implications of the preceding three moments regarding the sort of graduate education that future theological school faculty members ought to have. This too was addressed from contrasting points of view by James H. Evans, Jr., Edward Farley, and Richard P. McBrien.

The last two moments were designed to work together. The Consultation was broken down into quite small discussion groups of five to ten who were asked to identify the most important two or three issues that had emerged for them during the Consultation. It was my experience, though this may not have been at all representative, that the small group I was in generated far and away the most interesting and lively group discussion of the entire Consultation. The results of those small group discussions were then to be the subject matter of a concluding panel discussion among Richard J. Mouw, Charles Wood, David H. Kelsey, Michael A. Fahey,

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James H. Evans, Jr., and Marjorie H. Suchocki on the topic “Issues, Criteria and Strategy for Building Theological Faculties of the Future.” It is fair to say, I think, that “Issues” got some attention, “Criteria” little, and “Strategies” none at all.

The importance of the intent of the Consultation is indisputable. The rationale of its structure is clear and, in the abstract, entirely plausible.

II. Recurring Issues

It would be very difficult to argue that the Consultation generated a discussion that in fact “moved” anywhere. Although the Consultation gathered under a large umbrella topic (“Building Theological Faculties of the Future”), it is clear that it was not designed to address any one well-focused issue, discussion of which could be hoped to get clearer and go deeper as session followed session. Nor was there any “implicit argument” growing underneath the inevitable surface fragmentariness, miscommunication, incomprehension, incoherence and their accompanying bewilderments, no cunning to this minabyte of history. In any case, there had been no intention to press the consultants to any consensus about the issues raised by the umbrella topic, and none was achieved.

There were, however, some topics that kept reappearing. Although they will surprise no one, they are important enough to be worth tagging. More often than not they did not emerge so much from the contrasts between two presentations on a given topic, e.g. in the third moment in the Consultation’s design, as they did from contrasts between presentations made on two quite different topics. In retrospect four in particular strike me.

(1) “*Theological Education*” vs. “*Education for Ministry*”: Is there a difference between them, and if so, what is it and what long-run difference does it make? The issue surfaced first in discussion following the opening presentation, resurfaced in my group’s discussion following the Mouw/Zikmund presentations at the third stage of the Consultation, came up again in discussion of graduate education of future faculty, and yet again in the concluding panel and plenary discussion.

There seemed to be the following pattern in the discussions of this issue. Opening question: Should we *define* our enterprise as “theological education” or as “education for ministry”?

a) Some responses appeared to assume that the two terms are not mutually exclusive. In that case, what is at issue conceptually is, “Which phrase defines the other: Is “theological education” “theological” *because* it is “education for *ministry*”; or is education really effective “education for ministry” because it is (ministry quite aside) first of all “theological education”? Agreed, education can be at one and the same time “theological” and “for ministry”; but not agreed, which is the

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basis of the other? What difference does it make in the long run? Some hold the (more usual) view that for them theological education must be defined as “education for ministry” because otherwise it lacks a clear grounding in ecclesiology (a theological argument) and because their schools were founded by churches for the express purpose of educating their future clergy and would rightly disavow them were they to cease to define themselves by that goal (both a moral and a pragmatic argument!). Others held that theological education defined as ministerial education has not proven to be very effective precisely because it defines itself as education for ministerial functions. Further, they held that theological education would in the long run prove more effective at educating future ministers were it defined as “theological” education by the fact that it focuses not on preparation for ministerial functions but on cultivating student’s capacities to “think theologically” and act in theologically formed ways (a pragmatic argument); in addition, they sometimes urge that the theological *locus* by reference to which our enterprise is best understood is not in the first instance ecclesiology but rather some more basic topic, say “faith” or even “God,” on which ecclesiology itself ultimately depends. The differences in judgment regarding the pragmatic arguments clearly have concrete consequences for the future. The differences in judgment regarding the theological arguments do too, or so I shall discuss below.

b) Other responses seemed to assume that the phrases “theological education” and “education for ministry” *are* mutually exclusive. It was as though to characterize our enterprise as “education for ministry” clearly ties it to the Church, whereas to characterize it as “theological education” would be to tie it exclusively to the academy, and to the enterprise of “religious studies” in particular. That certainly raises the important issue of the relation between our enterprise and “religious studies,” especially since increasingly the latter is the context in which our future faculty members receive their graduate education. However, it is equally clearly a different issue than the one raised in (a) above. The two were not always kept distinct in the Consultation discussions. Perhaps we need a three-way rather than two-way distinction: Religious Studies, Christian Studies Sub-division/Theological Education/ Education for Ministry.

(2) *Concreteness, Pluralism and Epistemology.* Frequently raised and as frequently skirted was an issue that the world of theological education is going to have to face simply because it is part of the larger world of higher education and of North American intellectual culture generally. Whatever else it is, theological education is a struggle to know and to understand. Inevitably its practices assume the validity of one or another epistemology. Because it aspires to intellectual respectability within the world of the academy, it adopts epistemologies honored in the

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academy. Thus far they have been epistemologies rooted in the Enlightenment. As is well known, epistemologies coming from the Enlightenment are now under vigorous assault in the academy at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Some see this conflict as the harbinger of a cultural change away from the Enlightenment as momentous and emancipatory as was the rise of the Enlightenment itself; others have a near-hysterical picture of it as the return of barbarism and the dark ages; others think it merely one more passing struggle within the intellectual culture of the Enlightenment¹. Nor do the participants in the assault constitute a united front, a single ideology with one common epistemology. What they do all have in common, however, is the conviction that our knowing and understanding are shaped by our cultural and social locations, that they vary in large part because our cultural and social locations vary, and that our cultural and social locations vary because they allow us various amounts of cultural and social power. In short, they share the conviction that knowing and having power are intimately related in ways that Enlightenment epistemologies ignore.

The call for recognition of pluralism in the building of faculties was acknowledged repeatedly during the Consultation. There was in addition a call to recognize that pluralism is *not* adequately acknowledged in its concreteness when its roots in power differences due to differences in social and cultural location are ignored. Acknowledgement of pluralism that confines itself to pluralisms of “theological points of view,” of “scholarly methodologies,” of Christian traditions, or even of cultural conditioning are merely abstract, it is charged, when they fail to attend to the question of the relation between knowing and power. This issue came up a few times explicitly, but mostly it was present between the lines, in leading questions not answered and in the silences. As noted above, it was implicit less in the contrasts between presentations on the same topic and more in the contrasts between presentations made in different concurrent sessions at the third moment of the Consultation’s design. It seems, for example, to be implicit in the tensions between Berling’s presentation on pluralism and Stackhouse’s presentation on mentoring. The call to recognize *this* issue about pluralism was not acknowledged in the discussions. It will not go away.

(3) *Graduate Education of Future Faculty*. This is a topic that came up in a number of different settings during the Consultation, from the opening reflections on “criteria of excellence” through discussion of “Faculty as Scholars and Teachers” to the panel explicitly devoted to it. It was a frequent topic, but it is not clear that there was much consensus about just what the *issues* are that it raises. Some seemed to feel that the issue is the very nature of graduate education. Graduate

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education in the relevant areas is ordered to and by the wrong overarching goal (the study of “religion,” perhaps), the claim goes, so that young scholars emerge with no sense of and little capacity for precisely *theological* education. Others seemed to hold the view that the issue has to do, not with the goal and structure of relevant graduate education, but with the fit between young scholars’ personal religious commitments and that of the theological school seeking to build its faculty. Conviction that there is an important problem here seemed to be intense enough to keep the issue coming back. At the same time, there was a curiously dispassionate tone to most of the group discussion of the matter.

III. “If the People Won’t Come, You Can’t Stop Them”

That brings me to the most subjective and speculative part of this piece. It seemed that the glaze factor in the eyes of the participants in this Consultation was abnormally high. Sometimes this seemed to be born of the absence of a sense of passionate urgency about the topic at hand. Sometimes it seemed the expression of bafflement about how to get a grip on the question. Sometimes it may have been stupefaction before an unabsorbable barrage of opinions. Often it seemed simply to be boredom with what were perceived to be all too familiar problems and ideas. In any case, what Barbara Wheeler in her presentation the first evening called the “yawn shop” syndrome seemed to have set in. And yet nobody denies the enormous importance of the task of building future faculties. Nor does anyone deny the pressing need to be as self-conscious and clear as possible about the issues that task raises and what consequences follow from alternative resolutions of those issues. Why, then, were the issues so difficult to engage?

Naturally, there is no one explanation, and everyone involved will have a pet theory. It may be that the design of the Consultation worked against itself. Perhaps it is no accident that the only really lively discussion I encountered came in the only truly small group I was assigned to at the penultimate moment of the Consultation’s overall movement. Maybe the design’s plausible rational sense did not make good group-psychological sense; but that is the easy and doubtless cheap wisdom of hindsight.

In any case, I want to suggest that a clue to important reasons for our difficulty engaging the issues may be provided by a very common phenomena in the discussions: a tendency to shift from issues to concrete-things-to-do, from critical reflection and analysis to moralizing. Critical reflection and analysis of what the

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criteria of faculty excellence ought to be, of the sorts of pluralism faculties should exhibit and why, of the ways in which faculty should be mentors and why, or of what ought to count as genuinely scholarly research and publication by specifically theological school faculty seemed repeatedly to be translated as hectoring injunctions to do things: more interdisciplinary teaching! recruit a more pluralistic faculty! nurture more faculty collegiality! encourage more faculty research! get theory and practice more fully integrated with each other! This translation of an invitation to think freely into an agenda of the good things that must be done, of gospel into law, was reflected in one administrator's plaintive remark, "I already know what I need to do; just help me get the funding!"

That, in turn, would surely help breed boredom. Everybody does indeed already know that these things need to be done in order to have more excellent faculties. They have been celebrated as the goals for improved theological faculties since Niebuhr, Williams, Gustafson's *The Advancement of Theological Education* in 1957.² To perceive this Consultation as designed to celebrate them one more time would be "*deja vu* all over again." While this may help explain the high level of glaze factor, it also poses a fourth issue.

(4) *Why has it been so difficult to change our faculties in these regards?* If we have known for more than thirty years that these were good things to do, why have we not made more progress? If this question genuinely was at issue in the Consultation, it was *really* implicit in the discussions. It never came close to public mention, let alone public discussion.

An entirely speculative partial answer: It is because we do not really trust that critical reflection on our own practices of theological education could help change them. We characteristically address problems by turning to problem solving, to doing something programmatic. We rarely examine our own practices of problem-solving in theological education to test whether our *descriptions* of the problems are adequate. However, it may be that the very conceptual equipment we have been using to name and describe problems is itself part of the reason why the problem proves resistant to our solutions. It may be that the concepts we use obscure a particular problem more than they illuminate it. Perhaps a reason why "theory" and "practice" resist integration is that the conceptual pair "theory/practice" misdescribe and obscure both what we are doing and what isn't quite right about it. Perhaps a reason why "interdisciplinary" teaching and research still has low priority in theological education is that as commonly used in the academy, "discipline" is a misleading concept for describing genuinely critical scholarship in specifically theological education, and we are not yet clear what the right concept

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should be. To explore such questions is to undertake conceptual work, reflecting critically on what we do rather than problem solving, and we are unaccustomed to doing it in regard to our own practice of theological education. Not that such reflection could replace problem-solving and by itself change theological education; but when various programmatic efforts to solve the same few problems are for a generation repeatedly ineffective, conceptual reflection should perhaps be attempted as a step that may be practically helpful.

Indeed, that suggests speculative partial answers to our question about why the Consultation found it so difficult to engage the issues laid before it. It is much too simple (not to say, impertinent) to say that beleaguered theological school administrators are so conditioned to having to solve immediate and pressing problems that they automatically translate conceptual issues into practical tasks that turn out to be so boringly familiar it is difficult to get engaged with them. The situation is far more complex.

To begin with, borrowing from an issue above, the world of theological education is itself enormously pluralistic. The differences among theological schools, to be concrete about it, are partly rooted in their various social and political locations and partly in the sorts of power they have and the ways in which it is organized in each school. Accordingly, issues posed abstractly have to be reformulated for each school in ways relevant to it in its concrete particularity. Naturally enough, in order to engage the issues in terms of their own schools, administrators have to reformulate them in terms of how “things actually work” in their schools, i.e. how power is related to knowledge in the actual practices constituting their schools, just in order to get a grip on the issue as an *issue* and *not* as a problem to be solved! Part of the difficulty in engaging the issues may be that we have not yet learned how to state general issues in ways adequate to the fact of concrete pluralism among theological schools.

That leads to a second matter. To the extent that “location” shapes understanding, each school tends to understand schools with quite different locations in stereotyping ways. For example, some schools are and some are not owned and operated by churches or church agencies. For those that are, this is an important part of their “location,” a fact about the arrangement of economic and political power that governs their common lives and makes them the concretely particular schools they are.

Accordingly, part of the difficulty in engaging the issues, for example, issue (1) above, may be rooted in the way location shapes understanding. When someone from a denominational school insists that what defines a theological school

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is “education for ministry,” since that is the goal for which the denomination founded and funds the school, it may be difficult for those whose professional life is shaped by “free standing” schools not to hear this in stereotyped fashion as a surrender of a theological school’s proper “transcendence” of the church (and vice versa). After all, it need not be so understood.

Conversely, when someone from a “free standing” school urges that theological education is ill-served if it defines itself as “education for ministry,” it may be difficult for those whose professional life is shaped by a denominational seminary not to hear this in stereotyped fashion as evidence of indifference, if not hostility, to the church and its ministry and a hegemonic effort to make its own “location” normative for all theological schools. After all, it need not be so understood.

Each “hearing” may be a deeply stereotyped misunderstanding, leading to an inability to take the “other” seriously and a disinclination to engage the issue. This might go some way toward explaining disinclination even to entertain the possibility that conventional wisdom about the overarching goal of theological education may be in need of reexamination, let alone the possibility—which would follow—that the movement and structure of theological education might require reformulation. The point is, that part of the reason for our difficulty in engaging the issues together may be the way our own “locations” shape our understanding of one another, combined with ill-developed capacities for critiquing of our own stereotyped thinking.

In short, it may be that our difficulty to engage the issues results in considerable part from the combination of a traditional distrust that critical conceptual reflection on practice can change the practice, our persisting difficulty to pose issues of general importance in ways that make them accessible to the concrete pluralism of theological school, and insufficiently developed capacities for self-critique of the ways in which our respective “locations” as schools skew in stereotypes our construals of one another.

ENDNOTES

¹ See Dinesh D’Souza, “Illiberal Education”, *The Atlantic*, Vol. 267, No. 3 (March, 1991), pp. 51-79 for an account which, if not expressive of near hysteria, seems likely to provoke a good bit of it.

² Niebuhr, Williams, Gustafson, *The Advancement of Theological Education*, Harper & Row, New York, 1957.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Jane D. Douglass

The focus of my presentation is on our present seminary faculties which will have the responsibility for moving theological education into that future with which much of the consultation on “Building Theological Faculties” was concerned. How can our present faculties grow professionally and adapt to the new demands being placed upon them by our moment in history? How can we make the necessary transition to the faculties of the future?

My colleague, Thomas Gleeson, a seminary president, and I have been asked to put ourselves in each other’s shoes to think about the shared responsibility between administration and faculty for faculty development. I as a faculty member have been asked to make some suggestions about what deans can do to aid in faculty development. Mr. Gleeson will give us a case study of a faculty which is deeply engaged in professional development. As I speak of deans, I hope any presidents or other administrators will know that I assume that they, too, share in the task of faculty development, directly or indirectly. But I assume that in most seminaries the dean, the chief academic officer, holds the primary responsibility for that task.

You may quite properly ask why I would presume to speak about deans’ responsibilities, even when invited to do so, since I have never been a dean. Most deans, of course, were once faculty members and have some personal experience of the other side of the desk. As I reflected on this question, I tallied up at least 6 deans under whom I have served, all of whom I have counted as friends; so I can at least claim to have observed a variety of deans at work. Furthermore for three years I was married to a dean when my professor husband became dean of a liberal arts college. This experience, as you can imagine, surely increased my sympathy for the long hours and intense work of deans.

Not the least of the complications of the deanship as I understand it is the necessity of wearing two hats: one as a faculty member, a first among equals perhaps, a colleague within the faculty who represents the faculty to the administration; the other as an administrator, a colleague to the president, who represents the administration within the faculty. Therefore I shall look at the dean from these two perspectives.

I. First of all, the Dean as faculty colleague can wear the mortarboard with pride, remembering what it means to be a seminary faculty member: a scholar; a teacher; a citizen of the campus community, the wider community, and the world; and part of a world-wide Church of all times and places. All of these roles must be

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held together, though faculty members will do so differently. Perhaps one definition of faculty development might even be a deepening in the understanding of each of these roles and growth in one's ability to function effectively in them, along with the progressive integration of those four roles within one's professional person. Poverty in the understanding of any one of them is an impoverishment of one's life as a seminary faculty member.

The very attempt to define "faculty development" raises a vexed question. The first two roles, scholar and teacher, are those most commonly evaluated and measured by the academic community at various stages of advancement in rank. But many of our seminaries also include service to the campus community, to the broader human community, and to the church among their criteria for evaluation. It also seemed to me that for the purposes of our discussion this weekend, these broader roles very helpfully frame our thinking about faculty development as related to the particular historical moment in which our seminaries are living and considering their future.

The dean as faculty member will remember also that faculty members are called to be both conservative and radical at the same time: they are conservative because they are focused on preserving and transmitting a heritage, a very precious one, essential to the very heart of the Church's life and mission; but at the same time they are by their calling radicals who must always be exploring on the edges of the known, climbing out on precipices or down into volcanoes to find the various fresh vantage points from which to see more clearly just what it is that they must conserve and transmit. Deans who bring their hiking boots and regularly participate in these exploratory expeditions will best be able to inspire and encourage the novices or the timid among the faculty—and also best be able to interpret to other administrators and supportive constituencies the heady exhilaration of the academic enterprise and its significance for the Church.

Deans who keep their intellectual curiosity alive can work with their faculty colleagues to create a climate in which all faculty members can grow and develop to the best of their capacities. What are some of the things they can do together to create such a nurturing climate?

1. They can cultivate a collegial relationship among themselves, marked by mutual respect rather than competitive elbowing for position. All faculty members can find their voices more confidently in an atmosphere of trust.

2. Deans and faculty members can develop regular faculty discussions or seminars in which all participate. These could take the form of reports of faculty research, papers around a common theme, or study of an ecumenical document, for example. Bringing interesting visitors to the campus to offer fresh perspectives can

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also stimulate useful conversation. Imaginative thinking is required, however, to make the best use of any of these formats to generate lively participation.

3. Deans and faculty members can work together to find the optimal balance of faculty engagement in governance: one which engages faculty fully in policy-setting for the academic program and appropriately in the broader campus life without draining all available faculty time and energy for internal housekeeping.

4. They can encourage an ongoing process of rethinking the curriculum in the light of emerging intellectual visions of our common task. Traditional disciplinary walls may poorly contain some important insights into our common task and do not facilitate the integration of the disciplines which we ask of our students.

5. They can discourage the automatic perpetuation and routine filling of sharply-defined faculty “slots” where a departing colleague is simply replaced by someone very similar. A mechanism can be developed which allows deans and faculty members to reexamine together on an ongoing basis what teaching areas will need to be covered when a position falls vacant. They can step back from the present structure and ask what kind of faculty would be needed to do what the faculty dreams of doing in theological education. Routinely-defined faculty slots may perpetuate gaps in the curriculum, and tend to exclude some superbly creative scholars who could bring vitality and stimulation to theological education.

6. Deans with their faculties can undertake a program of continuing education for existing faculty members. Faculty members are constantly challenged by new methods of study in their field, newly available sources, changing issues before the church and the world, and change in the nature of the student body. Some narrowly trained specialists may need to explore the broader world of humanistic education to renew the sources of their own work. Some faculty members may need to learn more about the needs of new groups of students in their classes: second-career students, women, or minority students. Some may need to acquire new skills in their own fields. Faculty members can react to change either by becoming defensive or by acknowledging their ongoing need for updating. I recently sat in on a national-level consultation in which a respected church historian violently attacked the folly of contemporary insistence on teaching women’s history and black history on the grounds that such trivialities subverted the classical curriculum. I admired him greatly two hours later when he apologetically explained to the same group that in fact he—and many others—had never been trained in women’s history or black history and felt incompetent to teach about them. He then began to

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explore ways in which church historians could be assisted in updating their education in these areas. Deans with their faculties can create a climate where adventurous exploration of important new territory is normal practice, and together can devise imaginative ways to help each other grow. The faculty seminar program may be part of this effort. In some situations team teaching can produce exciting growth in the faculty members who work together on a challenging new course.

7. Younger faculty members can be offered a wide range of opportunities to teach courses at different levels and to serve the community in responsible ways, through challenging committee assignments, for example. Deans and their faculties can keep in mind the needs of younger faculty members for professional growth as they make course and committee assignments.

8. Deans and their faculties can stretch the vision of the community to foster ecumenical experience and global perspectives on all that we do. One can work to increase the number of international students in the community, arrange opportunities for students to work with overseas churches, and foster international exchange of faculty members. This stretching is extraordinarily important to faculty development at our moment in history.

9. For the longer future, deans and faculties together need to search out especially outstanding students, especially those from ethnic minority groups, and encourage them to prepare for seminary teaching. They need to be encouraged to receive as rich and broad an education as possible to give them flexibility to deal with future change. Deans and faculties must be concerned not only to develop the existing faculty generation but also to raise up a superb generation of faculty for the future. Therefore they also need to be reviewing Ph.D. programs in the light of the discussions during the conference.

10. Above all, deans and faculties must be working together to develop a theological vision of their school's mission in the late twentieth-century world, one which confronts all the issues of change which were discussed.

II. In all these examples I have pictured deans wearing faculty hats, mortarboards, leading by the contagious vitality of their own lives as scholars, leavening the loaf. But deans also wear an administrative hat, representing the faculty among administrators and the administration among faculty. While wearing this hat, deans can lobby the administration on behalf of faculty needs and coach faculty members as part of their responsibility for faculty development.

First, what can the administration be asked by the dean to do to foster faculty development?

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1. Administrators should provide for regular paid sabbaticals, with a requirement for a study plan in advance and a report at the time of return. This may be one of the most important provisions to be made.

2. They can provide adequate secretarial assistance in order to free time for research and writing.

3. They must provide an adequate library, with full and helpful facilities for interlibrary loans where necessary for research. Whatever the institution's table of organization might be, the dean has a moral obligation to befriend the librarian.

4. Information on grant sources for faculty research can be circulated.

5. A pool of research funds to be allocated for small research needs can be provided: grants for visiting a distant library, purchasing a specialized microfilm, even providing work-study student help for research. Help with special child-care needs can be provided. When these items must compete in strained family budgets with orthodontia and college tuition, research often loses out.

6. Travel funds to attend scholarly meetings should be provided.

Second, what can the dean do as coach for the faculty?

1. All faculty members, tenured and untenured, can be asked each year or two to share their plans for professional development: new research, improvement of a course or of teaching methods—and to report on their progress. If the Dean approaches such a plan with genuine interest, faculty members usually welcome this concern and find the sharing helpful and motivating.

2. All faculty members, tenured and untenured, can be invited to send the Dean copies of their published work as it appears. This is a tradition in many schools where the Dean proudly displays the faculty's work in some appropriate place. Even this gesture of interest can be useful in itself—and informative for the Dean. But still greater rewards come to deans who actually read these publications and respond to the author about their content. We all know this would be a work of supererogation, since it is a rare dean who could read any book at all during the normal work day in the office. The quality of communication and conversation which such a practice can foster, however, strongly recommends it.

3. Deans can coach younger faculty members on ways to publish their work, encouraging them to submit articles to juried journals where they will get helpful feedback from reviewers and where their work will get wide readership and critical response.

4. Deans can take an interest in the faculty's teaching skills. Course syllabi could provide the dean with an overview of the whole curriculum. Then the dean can help the faculty as a whole to see where courses need to be adjusted for better coverage, focused on new issues, or made more global or more inclusive of the

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concerns of women and ethnic minority persons. Regular student evaluations of all courses permit the dean to coach faculty members on teaching skills when weaknesses become visible.

5. On search committees and tenure review committees, deans can keep a perspective on research and writing which encourages critical review.

6. At times deans can make judicious adjustments in course load where important research needs a little extra time for completion.

7. Finally, deans can be patient when action on an apparently simple business item on the agenda of a faculty meeting is disrupted with probing questions that just might in the long run prove fruitful. Learning to ask the right questions may be one of the most important aspects of faculty development.

Most of my suggestions to deans wearing their hats as faculty members or as administrators have focused on only two of the roles of a faculty members: faculty as scholars and faculty as teachers. Those were, of course, central to our concerns at the meeting. But I do not at all wish to leave the impression that the other two roles—as citizens and as the faithful in the church—are somehow peripheral. In fact it is often in the *world* where we live as citizens and in the *church* that we find the questions which shape our scholarly research agenda and our course outlines. Earlier I suggested that faculty development might even be defined in terms of growth in these four roles and their integration in our professional persons. Such a concept would make abundantly clear that the dean's task in faculty development is not merely to extract more articles about less and less from the faculty, but rather to help faculty members grow as whole professional people, finding research which has real significance for them and for others and finding their own voices to add to scholarly conversation.

Just as deans will speak up if they see poor teaching and poor scholarly work, surely deans will raise their own voices in questioning if they observe that nowhere in their communities are there theological discussions of the meaning of war and peace, or of sustainable lifestyles on a threatened planet earth, or of the nature of contemporary ecumenism, COCU or Canberra. Keeping alive an awareness of the need to balance our various roles as theological faculty members is surely part of the dean's task.

Finally let me observe that deans, acting *alone*, can do much to stifle faculty development but little to create it. Faculty development, like all education, requires motivated effort on the part of faculty members. Deans, working *with* the faculty, on the one hand, and the president on the other, can help in the ways I have suggested to create a community life conducive to personal and professional growth and can help to provide motivation and practical support for that growth. A dean's

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role surely requires expert diplomacy and teamwork in faculty development if all our theological faculties are to become in time the theological faculties we will need in the future.

A FACULTY WHICH DEVELOP THEMSELVES

Thomas F. Gleeson

INTRODUCTION

Almost five years ago, I came to the Jesuit School of Theology from a number of years working in the administration of Jesuit universities—as departmental chair, graduate programs director, liberal arts dean and finally as religious superior of a large university Jesuit community. What I found—and have tried my best to facilitate—was a remarkable faculty, one which was well along into the subtle process of encouraging each other’s growth as theological professionals—well along into the process of becoming a faculty which develop themselves.

The faculty which I try to serve see themselves not simply as academicians or practitioners of their respective disciplines, but rather as theological professionals. A wider notion of service to the Church and thus to the larger public is their shared mission, whether through the wider scope of their published research or their seeing teaching in a wider sense—so that, for example, field education goes beyond administration and becomes genuine instruction. Theological professionals then who work together for that larger good.

What I have to share is one administrator’s view of one faculty—a faculty and especially a dean to whom and for whom I am most grateful. These remarks then are not a prescription; at best you may find here a helpful idea or two.

COMPONENTS OF A FACULTY WHICH DEVELOP THEMSELVES

Let me turn then to the task at hand by describing our situation in two ways: first in its similarities to other programs; and then in its differences.

1. Similarities:

First, the school follows the usual six-year tenuring process based on the standard criteria: teaching performance (including both student and departmental evaluations); scholarly publication (internally judged as well as externally refereed); and service to the school, the larger Graduate Theological Union and the Church.

Second, Interaction with Junior Faculty. Here the given department—whether Biblical Studies, Historical and Systematic Theology or Pastoral Theology and Ministry—formally reviews junior faculty in the teacher’s second and fourth year. The tenure review is conducted by the school’s Committee on Appointment, Rank and Tenure. Student evaluations reported by the Dean are part of all reviews.

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Third, the standard teaching load for the school is two classes per semester, although doctoral faculty members chair and serve as members of dissertation committees as well. Total students taught by each faculty member, however, average about 35 or 40 and seldom exceed 50 per semester. Writing semesters are available on a limited basis with the permission of the Dean.

Fourth, the school follows a fairly standard sabbatical policy for faculty members, namely a full year every six years after tenure at one half of the yearly salary. Some faculty prefer to take semester length sabbaticals twice during the period at three-fourths of the yearly salary.

Finally, the school provides the usual secretarial and administrative support services. With each of the faculty members having his or her own computer, the need for some of these services has noticeably decreased.

2. Differences:

What are the components which appear to be different but often relate to or build on those standard elements? Here I'll try to follow somewhat the same order—moving from the more evaluational to the more developmental aspects of the program.

First, peer evaluation for senior faculty. In many schools, junior faculty often engage in a good deal of informal peer evaluation; senior faculty are unlikely to do so. Unfortunately, their formal evaluations often are limited to reckoning and do little to encourage self-improvement. While tough decisions are necessary, structural changes which encourage an over-all climate of self-improvement are needed.

Two years ago, our faculty developed and implemented a peer review process to encourage growth in senior faculty. At the times of promotion to full professor and of application for regular sabbaticals, the department, through its chair, is now required to conduct an evaluation which is part of the Appointment, Rank and Tenure Committee review. For full professor, external referees are also included. And in those cases where senior faculty do not submit a sabbatical proposal, a departmental review is mandated in the year following the year that the faculty member is first eligible for sabbatical leave.

Second, the school and the larger GTU encourage a good deal of team teaching, especially across departments and GTU member schools. The school counts the team-taught course as a full course for each of the participating instructors.

Third, on the last Wednesday of each month during the school year a faculty colloquium is held. Well beforehand, the presenting faculty member distributes copies of a projected article or book chapter to all full-time faculty. At the session, the presenter briefly reviews his or her work, then entertains questions,

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discussion and suggestions for the work's improvement. The hour and a half session is followed by a reception and dinner provided by the school. The Colloquium is a faculty idea which is over 20 years old. It is clear that a climate of involvement and support has developed—a climate where the good news of published research is genuinely shared.

Finally, direct institutional support takes on two forms: to the individual faculty member and to the faculty as a whole. In 1986, the school was privileged to participate jointly with the Pacific School of Religion in the Lilly Endowment's Faculty Scholarship Development Program. In addition to establishing a joint Faculty Grants office with PSR, the Lilly grant provided monies for research and editorial assistants in the form of GTU doctoral students. And those monies happily coincided with the establishment by the GTU of the Jane Newhall Fellowships for the same purpose.

At the grant's conclusion and again with the help of the Lilly Endowment, the Faculty Grants Office was widened to include the entire GTU. At the same time, the school maintained individual faculty development monies as a regular line item in the annual budget. (Interestingly enough, we nine GTU member school Presidents now face the task of providing that same type of regular budgetary support for the GTU Faculty Grants Office when Lilly support ends next year.) Putting real money into annual budgets is probably the most important action a school can take to enable the emergence of faculty which develop themselves.

But faculty develop themselves together as well. And in 1988, our faculty committed themselves to a specialized program of group faculty development, namely in the area of Hispanic Ministry. Through the generosity of the Pew Charitable Trusts, all faculty are now participating to varying degrees in a comprehensive program of Hispanic Ministry-related development activities. A significant number have already begun to develop strong competencies in the Spanish language and in Hispanic culture. And the school as part of its Hispanic Ministries Center is committed to search out and hire several more bi-lingual/bi-cultural faculty members.

CONCLUSION:

I have tried to describe for you a number of elements—some old and some new, some more evaluative and some more developmental—all elements of a shared responsibility. Unfortunately, that structural description doesn't capture the climate or tone which has developed—a climate which itself encourages the faculty to develop, both individually and corporately, as theological professionals in service to their discipline, the Church and the larger public. I would like to conclude by

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detailing briefly three themes which cut across those structural elements and which have been particularly important in developing that self-development climate.

1. *Faculty Readiness*: When the school applied for the 1986-89 Lilly grant with PSR, the faculty was poised to take advantage of the grant. They were publishing and gradually expecting more scholarship from one another. And many were already involved in team teaching and learning teaching from one another. In short, a faculty which was ready to improve its craft.

2. *Institutional Commitment*: Whether it is the school itself or the larger GTU, grant proposals which begin programs which the school doesn't or perhaps can not continue are counter-productive. A faculty that receives substantial faculty development support feels betrayed when that support doesn't continue.

3. *Consistent Coordination*: Faculty development—in all those components—must be coordinated with other efforts by both faculty and administration. You can't provide funding to develop scholarship and then take little or no account of scholarly production in cases of promotion. And you can't pay lip service to scholarship and then for one reason or another advertise the school as a place where scholarship doesn't play an important role. Both faculty and students have keen eyes for institutional inconsistencies.

Readiness, commitment and consistent coordination are necessary preconditions for a faculty which develop themselves. Such an ideal is a shared responsibility for both faculty and administration, but both must make it a priority together. And that means that both must put aside the resources—whether space, time, persons or money—for that ideal to become a reality. Both must share that responsibility if faculty are to develop themselves.

ISSUES IN ACHIEVING PLURALISM IN FACULTY DEVELOPMENT: THE CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY OF INCLUSIVITY

Judith A. Berling

This article was written as remarks for a consultation on the future of theological faculties, and for a panel specifically entitled “Pluralism as a Criterion of Excellence in Faculty Development.” Pluralism, of course, admits of many definitions, and there are a number of respects in which pluralism may be a virtue on theological faculties. However, at the institutions with which I am most familiar, the key challenge and opportunity for pluralism as we head toward the end of this century is to incorporate into our faculties and our environments of theological education substantial and central attention to the issues of globalization and previously underrepresented constituencies. It is to these challenges that I chose to address my remarks, and that I now seek to address this article.

I do so with a considerable sense of humility because I have no “special wisdom” or “panaceas” to share on this issue. But then most of us in theological education are in much the same boat. This is an area in which our wisdom is at best incipient and tentative. We have only begun the process of addressing this vital issue, and we can perhaps best proceed by learning from each other: sharing insights, hopes, strategies, ideas, and experiences about how best to go about envisioning and building future faculties in which pluralism would be a key criterion for excellence. These thoughts may serve as a beginning; they are certainly not intended to be the last word.

My assignment for the consultation and this article was to discuss “pluralism” as a criterion of excellence. However, it must be said from the outset that pluralism, as worthy and important as it is, cannot function as the sole criterion of excellence. It is not an end in itself, and it does not float somewhere in a realm of Platonic ideals. It must always be firmly embedded in the specificities of a particular institution. The distinctive shape and vision of pluralism to which a school will aspire must grow out of the school’s mission, out of its denominational and ecclesial connections, out of its sense of its constituencies. As the President, Dean, and Board of an institution look with the faculty and constituencies toward the long-term future, the questions of the scope of the mission, of the denomination, and of the school’s constituencies should be raised. Does the school or the denomination need to take a fresh and broader look at the scope of its functioning? Yet even when a broader scope is considered or adopted, the heritage and distinctive theological and

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ecclesial mission of the institution will shape the vision and range of pluralism which will help it to achieve its goals. There is no single model of “pluralism” suitable to all ATS schools, but there are a set of issues which institutions seeking to address the issues of pluralism would do well to consider.

My reflections will attempt to delineate and briefly explore two sets of issues: one focusing on the knotty problem of standards of excellence, and the second concerned with the education of faculties prepared to deal with the issues of pluralism in their teaching in seminaries and theological schools.

THE STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Pluralism as a criterion of excellence in building the theological faculties of tomorrow is marked by a paradox. On the one hand, this is without doubt the issue which provides the greatest opportunity to envision a truly new and different shape of the faculty, and thus to forge a genuine theology, ministry, and theological education of the future. While there are many profound issues to be debated and addressed in theological education, the achievement of appropriately pluralistic faculties would create a favorable situation for progress on most relevant issues. It would ensure the infusion of many voices and talents, of new approaches and questions, and of new energy to re-envision theology and the church. On the other hand, the issue of genuine pluralism directly challenges our previous assumptions not only about that increasingly problematic term “excellence,” but also about the very nature of theology, the church, ministry, and the lived faith. It cuts to the very heart of the matter. To put this latter point most positively, the issue of pluralism challenges us to think and act in terms of a future we desire, but have not yet achieved, and which we can envision only dimly and imperfectly. To dream of the future is exciting and inspiring, but there are few guidelines; it is unknown territory into which we must move and there are always dangers in the unknown.

We have in the past quarter of a century increasingly begun to recognize the rich plurality of voices and peoples within the Church; we have come to recognize that the Church universal necessarily embraces a rich diversity of cultures and ethnic heritages, male and female—in fact all of the varieties of humankind. Discovery of the global diversity of the church, and of the plurality of voices and perspectives within our local congregations has slowly but steadily challenged us to rethink the nature of ministry and of Christian community.

If the very nature of theology, of the modalities and patterns of Christian communities, and of ministry needs to be fundamentally reexamined; the plural voices and perspectives which have so expanded our vision of the Church need to be included in this rethinking and re-envisioning of the church: included not only as

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pastors, Christian educators, and shapers of church institutions, but also as faculty in our theological schools. The inclusion of these voices is essential to the process of moving into the future with a richer, more nuanced, and more appropriate sense of the realities and possibilities of the Christian communities.

To put it another way, the emergence of the richness of voices within the churches has radically challenged and undermined a set of, until recently, unexamined assumptions about all aspects of theological education and scholarship. We are literally in the process of reconceiving what it is we are about—and we are, relatively speaking, only at the beginning of the process. This task will take us well into the twenty-first century, and thus will in large part be carried out by the theological faculties of the future. The momentum of this reconception of our task will pick up as the work is enriched and shaped by the articulate visions of the plural voices within the churches.

Most theological educators would affirm that the appropriation of plural voices into first-rate theological scholarship, teaching, and debate would be an enormous benefit for theological education. However, there is considerable lack of clarity (and not a little frustration on all sides) about how to work through the obstacles that seem to stand in our way. Many of these could be cited and discussed, but I would like to single out an obstacle around which a nexus of others revolves, because addressing it is a necessary (but not sufficient) key to moving forward to achieve the goal of pluralism in the faculties. The nexus of issues to which I refer can be discussed under the rubric of the “debate about excellence,” which, for good or ill, has become the focus of fierce controversy at many institutions.

The traditional criteria of “faculty excellence” were developed in, by, and for a far more homogeneous group of scholars (the mythical “old boys”) and for standards of scholarship and professional performance about which some consensus was forged in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These criteria, in other words, were rooted in a very specific social and cultural location. Many of the new voices not only belong to persons who do not “fit the mold” of the “traditional scholar,” but, more profoundly, these scholars with the new voices see as central to their scholarly work, their theological vision, and their notion of a lived faith a substantial critique of the previous assumptions. Thus the issue of the criteria of faculty excellence becomes deeply problematic.

The traditional criteria are now seen by many as too rigid, and based on too narrow a socio-cultural foundation, to be “fairly” applied to those who represent other social and cultural locations; they can become the means to “keep the others out.” On the other hand, extreme relativism—the lack of any shared criteria—is also problematic. One does not deserve tenure, for instance, simply “because she is a woman.” Nor is an ethic of “let each faculty/student do his/her own thing” anything

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like a criterion for excellence. Extreme relativism potentially fragments the faculty, erodes the sense of community in a school, undermines common discourse, and destroys any accountability. The worst danger is that the faculty simply becomes a motley crew of individuals, each beating his or her own drum. Such a condition does not allow for a shared vision of theological education or for a community of learning and faith in which students can participate and find their theological location.

In order to build theological faculties in which pluralism will be one of the criteria of excellence, each faculty will have to debate and work through a new and broader set of criteria for excellence which would relate to diverse approaches to theological scholarship and teaching. These broader shared criteria would be vital in two senses. The first is that they would create the basis of a community of learning, a concrete sense of how the pluralism to which the school is committed and which is embodied in its faculty creates a community of learning and an educational ethos. At a practical level, this broader consensus about excellence is necessary in creating faculty criteria for peer assessment, promotion and tenure. For the sake of newly hired faculty, this reexamination of faculty standards should be undertaken along with the commitment to pluralism, for it is a long and ongoing process. It is disastrous to the community and unfair to new faculty if these issues were raised in an intentional and substantial way only when those faculty whose work embodies broader modes of scholarship and teaching come up for tenure. Then it is too late.

There are two reasons many faculties either resist or fail to make headway in such reexaminations of standards of excellence. The first is that for each faculty member, her or his mode of doing scholarship and teaching is central to a sense of self-worth as faculty and even often to a sense of vocation to the profession. To question the adequacy of a faculty member's sense of standards is to strike close to the heart and soul. Thus the conversations must be guided with a sensitivity to the deep and personal feelings all faculty have on this matter. The second is the struggle over "who gets to set the standards." The debates are often seen as power struggles, as win-lose situations. One different approach is to group members of the faculty whose scholarly approaches are similar and ask each group to develop the criteria for excellence in their particular mode of scholarship, and then have these group proposals discussed and reviewed by the entire faculty. Such a procedure will lead not to a single standard, but rather to a set of criteria to cover different approaches and perhaps to some general principles which the faculty or school wishes to endorse for all of its faculty. This approach has the virtue of requiring all faculty to establish criteria of excellence to which they would be accountable, and at the same time educating all of the faculty about the range of scholarly approaches represented on

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the faculty. As Dean of a large and extremely diverse theological consortium, I am still amazed by the number of faculty who still cling to the notion that there is “a” single standard for all scholarship; if the faculty can get by that obstacle, they are half-way home.

The greatest challenge in this approach to exploring scholarly standards is to provide leadership in determining appropriate groupings; the threat of relativism lurks if an individual faculty member insists that he or she has a unique approach. Only group generation and discussion of standards will provide sufficient feedback and distance from one’s idiosyncratic habits of thought and writing. Moreover, discussion of the group-generated standards by the full faculty will require the group to articulate their approaches to a broader faculty audience. Very small faculties may have to work as a “committee of the whole,” asking each person to describe his/her sense of scholarly/faculty standards and criteria, and working from there to a shared consensus.

A faculty, then, need not have a monolithic standard of excellence, but rather a range of standards suitable for various scholarly approaches on which the faculty collectively has some consensus. However, the range of criteria will not support pluralism as a criterion of excellence for the theological faculty unless another dimension is added. That is, it is crucial that the plural voices and approaches in a diverse faculty be in genuine conversation with each other. Only then will they be mutually enriching. Only then will they shape a curriculum and community of learning which can shape and form the students. Only then will the presence of plural voices begin to affect and enrich the mission and vision of the institution. Pluralism as a criterion of excellence is not compatible with fragmentation and balkanization of faculties and theological communities.

I am aware as I write these words that many women, international, and racial-ethnic scholars and students would argue strongly that they need to be in conversation with their closest colleagues to find and articulate their distinctive voices, that they cannot simply be “thrown into the broader conversation.” I recognize and affirm that point, and would argue strongly that in hiring women, racial-ethnic, and international faculty, schools give careful attention to providing these persons with networks of support either at the institution or through extramural contacts; without such networks of support, the faculty cannot flourish and the articulation of the new voices will be stymied. They will always be speaking “from the margin” and will not find their own power. On the other hand, within each school, it is also important that all of the voices of the faculty come together to address issues of common concern and to reformulate and constantly refine the

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vision and practices of the institution. Pluralistic conversations of this sort do not necessarily lead to consensus or agreement, but do serve to broaden and redraw the common ground and key issues of theological education. If the faculty cannot engage in a genuine conversation about the theological enterprise across the lines of disciplines and perspectives, it will be well-nigh impossible for the students to perceive any order, much less coherence, in their educational experience. Students can learn from the differences and debates of the faculty, but it is hard for them to learn from a lack of interaction and a fragmented community of learning. This, I would argue, is particularly true in theological institutions, in which a sense of community and shared tradition are central to the educational and spiritual ethos.

One route which some institutions take to avoid engaging in the genuine reexamination of standards of excellence is what I would term the “safe marginalization” of women, racial-ethnic, and international faculty by adding new voices only in positions about which the faculty, the denomination, or the Board has “softer” criteria: in which—not to put it too finely—they care less because less is at stake. Marginalized positions may differ slightly from denomination to denomination, but field education, religious education, homiletics, contextual ministry, and functional theology are frequent examples. There is a paradox here, because there is often a broader and deeper pool of women, international, and racial-ethnic candidates in these fields. Nonetheless, it is a problem.

In order to embrace pluralism as one key criterion for excellence in building faculties, we must move beyond this syndrome in two complementary ways. 1) We must hire women, racial-ethnic, and international faculty for positions considered key, central, and defining, and not relegate them to the margins, the edges of our institutions. To fall into the pattern of “safe marginalization” raises real doubts about the school’s commitment to pluralism by students, constituencies, and the women, racial-ethnic faculty, and international faculty. 2) As part of our larger debate about the center and purposes of theological education, we need to question whether the previously marginalized positions are marginal to our task and mission. Does the current envisioning of center and periphery adequately define the task as we move into the future?

Thus we need not only to think through how to develop criteria for excellence in the work of faculty who represent diverse backgrounds, theological voices, and modes of scholarship, but we need to reconsider the aims of theological education to see more clearly how to conceive of the center and periphery of our task so as not to perpetuate the marginalization of plural voices and approaches.

PREPARING DIVERSE FACULTIES

In order to build excellent pluralistic theological faculties for the future, we will have to educate a generation of excellent and pluralistic theological faculties. In other words, in order to address this issue we cannot confine our angle of vision to the M.Div. programs of our seminaries, but must examine more carefully the qualities needed in the doctoral programs and the doctoral faculties to educate a pluralistic generation of faculty who are well qualified for the theological faculties of the future. To achieve our goal of “excellent pluralistic faculties” in the future, we will have to educate the persons who represent the new voices, and educate their colleagues to be prepared to enter into the kinds of conversations which will creatively transform theological education and revitalize the church.

As the Dean of a large theological doctoral program, I hasten to admit that we have a long way to go in leading our doctoral faculties to see the opportunity to educate future faculty with pluralism as a key to scholarly excellence. Doctoral curricula and programs have been far slower than M.Div. and professional curricula and programs to respond to this opportunity and need of theological education.

There are a number of reasons for the obstacles at the doctoral level. First, doctoral faculty see themselves as perpetuators and guardians of excellence in scholarship. This is in many respects a virtue and central to their mission as doctoral faculty. However, if we begin to concede the specific and narrow socio-cultural location of the traditional standards of “excellence,” then we must also begin to question what it would mean to “guard scholarly excellence” in a changing theological world. Second, doctoral faculty are opposed to “fads” in scholarship. This is also a virtue, but the theological and scholarly challenge of plural voices has been with us for more than a quarter of a century, and does not seem to be going away. Third, doctoral faculty in theological schools (who also teach M.Div. students) in their role as doctoral faculty often react against the pressures they feel in ministerial education to address these issues. For such faculty, the doctoral program is the last bastion of the standards which they feel have been stretched and/or compromised in professional education. Thus, ironically, advances made in the M.Div. curricula may create stronger resistance to change in doctoral programs, and the two levels of theological education may move further and further apart.

While some of this resistance among doctoral faculty may be unfounded, I would argue that there are some profound and legitimate issues with which doctoral faculty are struggling in these times. To dismiss this as stubbornness or conservative

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backlash neither recognizes the profundity of the intellectual challenge nor helps the faculty to find more positive answers to the dilemmas in which they find themselves.

During a review of the various areas of our doctoral program, some of the GTU faculty spoke poignantly about the fact that they were trained in one mode of theology and scholarship and were now being asked to supervise the doctoral work of students doing a radically different mode of theology and scholarship. Some of the older faculty wondered wistfully whether we were simply admitting “the wrong students,” but as they reflected more broadly on what they were seeing in theological education generally, they had to admit that the new generation of students was simply living in a different theological world and practicing new modes of scholarship. They doubted their qualifications to critically evaluate this work.

This is a real issue for theological faculties. In virtually every aspect of theological scholarship, not only are new issues being raised, but new modalities of scholarship are also being practiced and developed. The best of the current doctoral students are shaping the theology of the future: a theology which some faculty hardly know and others know only dimly. This is not, by the way, an issue limited to white males: feminist scholars and racial-ethnic faculty soon find themselves as teachers outpaced by students who have moved on to new sources, new theories, new methods, and new practices. Our doctoral programs, then, are experiencing profound future shock. Because of this fact, we need to articulate a new set of criteria for doctoral faculty who will consequently have the qualities to educate tomorrow’s faculty.

In addition to the traditional criteria of demonstrated excellence in their disciplines and mastery of the theoretical literature in and surrounding these disciplines, today’s doctoral faculty must have a set of additional qualities which will allow them to be flexible and adapt to the new circumstances and demands of their students.

1) Although it may be obvious, it is important to stress that the doctoral faculties will only be fully able to educate excellent pluralistic faculties of the future if they, as far as possible, embody our vision of diversity. We need women, racial-ethnic, and international faculty in our doctoral programs to extend and challenge the limits of what we are currently doing. This role of challenging and broadening the limits of scholarship and research should not rest solely on the shoulders of the students. Women, racial-ethnic, and international students will benefit from having faculty models from their own (or similar) backgrounds in the doctoral faculty. Furthermore, white male students will themselves be better prepared to function

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well in pluralistic faculties if their doctoral programs included faculty who model diverse voices and approaches to scholarship.

2) Pluralism will not be a genuine and effective criterion for the excellence of faculties unless the various perspectives in a pluralistic faculty are in genuine conversation with each other. Thus it is important in a student's doctoral committees that he/she interact with faculty representing pluralistic viewpoints. In order for this to be a positive experience, we need doctoral faculty who are willing to learn the skills of multicultural education so that they can provide support and guidance not only to students of their own gender and ethnic or cultural background, but also to those beyond it. This would mean that each student's doctoral training would authentically expose him or her to something of the plural views of doing scholarship and prepare him/her more adequately for the future of theological education.

This would only work, of course, if the faculty were prepared to be open to broader types of work, broader approaches, to be learners as well as experts. Many faculty already are, and have found that their own continuing education comes primarily from learning with their students, especially those who broaden their horizons.

Perhaps because they are confronted with an intellectual world in which the parameters of theological scholarship are changing so rapidly, many students I see dream of a fully supportive committee that would in all respects share their background and assumptions. However, in order to be prepared to teach the next generation, these students need to learn from exposing their work to broader perspectives and to learn to negotiate the paths of broader theological and scholarly conversation.

In a different context during this consultation, David Kelsey talked about two alternative qualities of theological faculty: they must either bring to their teaching and scholarship a deeply felt sense of a lived faith, or be able to enter imaginatively into the lived faith of others. In the context of the current discussion, I would argue that this is not an "either/or," but rather a "both/and" proposition: the ability to enter imaginatively into each other's stances and to listen so attentively that they can raise vital and critical questions across the lines of gender and cultural background as well as those of denomination or religious affiliation, will be an important quality in the faculties of tomorrow.

3) We need faculty strongly committed to continuing their own educations, stretching their approaches, expanding their reading, aspiring at least to literacy in the emergent modes of scholarship so that they can and will provide sound and critical supervision of students working in the new approaches.

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4) We need doctoral faculty who find stimulation in being stretched by their students to consider new theories, new methodologies, and even the “smudging” of disciplines (to invoke another Kelsey-ism) in order to pursue issues in a fresh way. If the faculty are intellectually engaged in and excited by such ventures, they will also ask the hard, critical questions which need to be raised to stimulate the next generation to articulate and defend the intellectual coherence of their approach. Doctoral faculty should find stimulating the notion of learning with a student, and engaging in the exploration of new modalities of scholarly work.

Doctoral faculties with these qualities would create an environment in which we would be able to provide adequate education for a pluralistic faculty, providing support and guidance for those “new voices” forging radically new theological perspectives and modes of scholarship, and helping doctoral students from more traditional social locations to see their work in the context of a broader pluralistic environment. Although I have been speaking about the qualities needed in the doctoral faculties, there is a “trickle down” theory embedded in the argument. That is, if the doctoral faculties embody the qualities listed above, they will be able not only to educate students who represent a range of backgrounds and perspectives, but to help students from a range of backgrounds and perspectives understand and negotiate the plural voices and approaches of theological education and scholarship. When these students become faculty they will carry these skills and qualities with them, so that they can help seminary faculties not only embody, but model and inculcate an openness and appreciation of plural voices in their teaching of seminary students. Then, in turn, those seminary students will be able to lead the churches, utilizing the skills and knowledge to help congregations to appreciate and understand the plural voices and points of view emerging within their own congregation and the church at large.

Moreover, if pluralism is to become a key criterion of excellence in theological faculties, the faculties must include a full range of voices soundly prepared to forge through their teaching, their writing, and their presence in the life of the church the new modes of theological thinking and of ministry which will inspire the church and shape it in the next century.

Achieving the goal of pluralism as a criterion of excellence is more complex than finding a way to add new voices: we must develop criterion to measure the excellence of the work flowing from the new modes of theology and teaching which come with these voices; we must educate current and future faculty in the skills and flexibility to appreciate plural modes of theology and distinctive voices; and we must develop modes of genuine conversation among the plural voices so that pluralism enriches and stimulates the intellectual and spiritual life of the community of learning and the formation of the students in the seminary.

"PLURALISM" AS A CRITERION FOR EXCELLENCE IN FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.

The heart of any seminary, divinity school or school of religion is its faculty. Schools can tolerate all sorts of temporary gaps in its delivery systems to students and still manage to survive to some degree, but institutions that neglect the task of hard recruitment of extremely gifted faculty are in for some very troubled days in their future. Moreover, it is not just the matter of recruiting of that all-star faculty that places the institutions at stake; it is just as important to weld that faculty into a team and to provide for its constant refreshment, growth and overall vitality. That is what will make the difference at the end of the day—and the end of the next decade.

In order to provide for such a well developed teaching machine, constant vigilance must be given to the matters of planned pluralism and enriched excellence. Each of these matters is worthy of a good deal of reflection and enlargement.

STRIVING FOR PLANNED PLURALISM

Presidents, deans and faculties that depend on the general ethos of the day or preferred quotas to see to it that pluralism is cared for in their faculties will be surprised to realize, not many years into the future, that they have been cheated in so doing with little more to show for all their work than certain statistics. Faculties must be planned and grown; not left to chance to emerge like toadstools.

The best work of a dean is accomplished by constantly working with department chairs years before faculty openings are available. The constant cultivation of potential candidates by phone, letter and informal/formal contacts at professional meetings is a primary prerequisite. Following bright young graduate students for a number of years during their studies with encouragement and advice is just as significant as courting the seasoned scholar who stands at the top of his/her field.

The pluralism, diversity and breath of scope sought can be located in several areas.

1. Pluralism is needed in *the stratification of the age of a faculty in a given department*. Too frequently departments tend to attract only those whose ages are roughly similar to others already working in that area. This is a mistake. Every effort should be made to locate brilliant teachers in each of the decades of life in each department so that gifted and experienced teachers are able to pass on to younger

scholars their experience and encouragement. This Timothy/ Paul relationship will provide a faculty that has a future long beyond the tenure of those currently in the ranks of associate or full professor. It builds continuity with the past, yet deliberately introduces youthful vigor for the future.

2. Pluralism is needed in *the breath of methodologies within a department*. It is boring and just wrongheaded to encourage/permit departments to hire faculty that all approach the problems and issues of their discipline from a similar point of view and with predictably safe conclusions, given previous stances within the department. True, this will give more peace to the dean and less trauma for the faculty, but it will narrow the experience of the students.

Students should be able to watch the faculty interact and thus to imitate them (for the student's initial moments of her or his career) in the way the faculty critiques and appreciates the competing methodologies of a colleague with whom they disagree. The experience will be a great learning experience for the student as well as more challenging both for the students and the faculty.

3. Pluralism is needed in *the complementing of competencies within a faculty*. Faculties must strive to balance out different skills, areas of strength, ways of looking at problems within departments. Some will be specialists in detail, such as linguistics, exegetics, or experts in restricted historical persons or epochs; others will be generalists who have a synthetic overview of the field and a pension for organic wholeness. Many types of competencies are needed if the theology is to be truly interactive with a wide range of skills and ways of solving issues.

4. Pluralism is needed in *cross-pollination of schools, mentors, theologies and ethnic/cultural/or gender perspectives*. A sterile environment for learning is one that is mono-cultural, mono-linguistic, mono-positional and monistic in the graduate school origins of its faculty or mentor's viewpoint. Not all those institutions that make the most noise about being pluralistic are actually all that open. Pluralism might have a better chance if universities and theological schools were as willing to incorporate faculty members that represented diverse religious commitments as they were to include the currently newsworthy additions such as those of different political, sexual or philosophical orientation.

As George M. Marsden says in his provocative articles entitled "Mum's the Word in College: Thoughts on the Silencing of Christian Professors" (*In Trust*. Vol. II, No. 3, 1991, p.11), "I have even heard the suggestion that no person who believes a particular religion should be allowed to teach about it...One cannot imagine it even being suggested about women's studies, or black studies. It is almost like saying at a music school that no musicians should teach." Yet some would advocate such a stance for religious adherents. Why do theological schools that hire "professors" shrink back and adopt such a timid posture when it comes to hiring those who,

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in addition to demonstrating intellectual acumen, also “profess” a vibrant faith? Diversity must be sought as the world moves from its previous colonialistic and then anti-colonialistic periods to what some are now calling the third era, *vis. globalism*. The ethnocentrism of the earlier two eras must now give way to the complementary nature of human knowledge and a full representation of race, cultures, gender and creedal variations.

PROMOTING FACULTY EXCELLENCE FOR THE FUTURE OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The job of finding, hiring and stimulating excellence at the heart of a school in her faculty cannot be left to pluralism alone. That will only put all the pieces on the board, as it were. More must be done to face some of the nagging residual problems that theological education continues to face. And if a faculty is not one of the primary groups to take up the task, the watching communities of faith and learning can expect that the stake for excellence will be imposed from some other outside source—a most demeaning and undesirable state of affairs.

Every faculty that would dare to strive for defining and promoting a balanced approach to three key tensions in theological education will be well on the way to achieving excellence and making a lasting contribution to our profession.

1. A new excellence can be achieved by *daring to ask what is the fundamental task of our profession?* The very question, of course, is an immediate offense to anyone in the post-modern world. In a neo-Kantian world one does not ask questions that imply some kind of unity, organizing principle or unifying task. *E pluribus unum* is fine as a motto of state, but the preference today runs *E pluribus plurum*. But that is where the courage to lead must be reassumed by the theological community that would dare to ask the question: What is at the center of our task? If Ed Farley is right and the quadrivium of the last century (and the beginning of this one) must be replaced, then what has taken theology’s place?

And if no aspirants to the vacant throne have come forth in the last 40 years, should we not take another look at theology and her other three handmaids?

Regardless of which way it goes, we still must ask: What is our fundamental task? As I see it, the only thing that unites us as a group of theological schools is our quest to ask what it is that we should be asking. We must dare to raise the question that is the problem everyone dances around, but no one wishes to tackle. And individual schools that have or are tackling that question will be here in the next century to ask further questions.

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2. A new excellence can be achieved by *locating a proper balance between high competence in the theoretical fields of theological study and a legitimate involvement with a “hands-on” approach to ministry.*

I, for one, refuse to drop either side of this equation. Theological schools that lift up and reward high attainment of the theoretical disciplines in our profession will make an important contribution, but they will opt for a model of education that has been tried and found wanting at the broadly defined university level precisely at the moment when all education has decided it needs more of the wholeness of life to be incorporated into its model of learning.

Must theological schools once again be the last to detect that even the culture has moved before we sensed the criticism that communities of learning, much less communities of faith, have been raising against us?

I predict that the decade of the 90's will demand of all education, including theological education, more contextual learning in the praxis of ministry, involving simultaneous input of high competency in the theoretical disciplines, and the insightful input of the laity as preparation for our profession. Fight it if we must, but those faculties who do will be the losers.

This is not to sell out to functionalism nor is it to make a case for anti-intellectualism as a requisite for professionalism. If anything, the academic rigors should be increased, not lessened. But in no case should they exclude an involvement of “hands-on” experience with laity fully participating.

3. A new excellence can be achieved by *encouraging high levels of specialization while simultaneously promoting and rewarding interdisciplinary teaching, researching and writing.*

My own institution deliberately renamed itself a “Divinity School” twenty-eight years ago simply because it wanted those studying for the gospel ministry to do so in a context where the highest standards were set for the theoretical disciplines and where those preparing to teach theology in the academy would compete in class with those preparing to preach and lead the Church.

Instead of insisting on a “publish or perish” mentality, a generous sabbatical policy was put in place which allowed for a half-year, fully-paid sabbatical every two academic years if a publishable research project was drafted and approved by the Faculty Senate. This model has proven to be an extremely wise policy that has fostered an enormous amount of increased faculty development, research and publishing. The benefits of such research spill over into the classroom daily.

This same faculty has been encouraged to team-teach with cross-disciplinary courses. It has been urged to be equally responsible to the Church as it is to the academy of scholars in its field. Involved are the practice of ministry by the whole

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faculty in programs such as PRO (Parish Residence Orientation), an exchange of tasks and locations between a faculty member and a pastor for ten weeks; ORD (Overseas Residency and Discipleship), for globalized views and involvements; and periodic leadership of pastors' conferences and pulpit supply. Others have strategized on how the seminary and the Church could have more of a reciprocal relationship in developing men and women for the work of the Church around the world. The job is far from being done to any degree of satisfaction or with room left for smugness or complacency.

CONCLUSION

Faculty excellence and pluralism are the quintessentials of institutional health and growth for the future. Few areas of administrative failure will have as profound an impact on the longevity and viability of theological institutions for the future as these areas of faculty pluralism and faculty excellence.

THE FACULTY AS MENTOR AND MODEL

Max L. Stackhouse

Unlike most who attended the conference on Building Theological Faculties, I am not an administrator. My views of theological education were formed by being a faculty member—not only during the time we did the study at Andover Newton,¹ but during parts of six different years as visiting professor in seminaries of India, Fiji, South-East Asia, and what was once the German Democratic Republic. Also influential has been the experience of serving in the chair of some five search or promotion/tenure committees recently. In such positions one has to think about faculty development and finding the kind and quality of scholars (three women, two minority males) who will shape the future of those institutions that attempt to embody the purposes of theology and education with highest standards.

For all the cultural and sub-cultural diversity these experiences entailed, I find the *basic* patterns cross culturally to be very similar. The differences between people because of social background, which glow so brightly in some people's minds, are not irrelevant; but they are overrated by those who presume that social-location determines ideas. It leads them into stereotyped treatment of any who do not agree with them.²

In fact, certain functions are built into the nature of the task of theological education, and these tend to modulate ideological or sub-cultural differences. We have to work within one or another particular mix of these functions in every seminary and divinity school and theological department that is not dedicated to the vagaries of “religious studies” or to some fundamentalism. They are, essentially, three:

First, some things are required simply by the fact that we deal with theology. There may be different approaches to the questions, different angles of vision, different doctrinal or evidential starting points and different methods that have been developed with great nuance and distinction; but since theology has to deal with the nature and character of God, with how we might know that reality reliably, and with the structure, dynamics, and implications of that knowledge for life, sooner or later the basic issues of truth, justice, and grace have to be faced. The rest is ideology or opinion or catechism.

The boundaries may be a little fuzzy here or there, and where the central issues are may be a matter of considerable dispute, but it does not take a great deal of prolonged study to determine whether one or another orientation is playing in the theological ball park. Even if play in that ball park is marked by very diverse styles—even fads—some of which we like and others which we can hardly stand,

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we can tell whether theology is being done or not, and we can tell whether it is being done seriously, just as we can recognize whether or not serious music is taking place when we hear a sitar or a gamelan orchestra even if we have been nurtured on or prefer guitars or symphonies.

Second, some things are required by the fact that we are engaged in education. If certain things do not take place and key processes are not at work, people do not learn. Here we refer not only to books and libraries, teachers and students, classrooms and “direct exposure” possibilities, but to encouragement for exploring, pondering, and analyzing, with dialogue; criticism, evaluation and all the rest.

Here too there may be a great number of variations of approaches and styles; but it is not hard to find out whether education is taking place or not. People tell you when they become stretched to discover deeper ideas, when they think new thoughts, when previously confusing things begin to make sense, when they fall in love with learning and when they begin to speak about wider worlds of understanding.

Third, some things are required because we do theological education for ministry. Of course, not all ministry is for the ordained clergy as defined by particular denominations. Some is for teaching in inter-denominational, non-denominational, or secular institutions, some for work in other professions, and some for specialized work—hospital chaplaincy, ethics consultant to corporations, etc. Indeed, if we think of the multiple professions fed by some schools, Luther’s dream of a “priesthood of all believers” seems to have become an institutional fact.

It is not terribly difficult to find out which definitions of ministry are regnant at an institution. A first and telling clue is the kinds of degree programs that are developed. It makes a great difference how much time, energy, resources, and concern goes into the M.Div. program as compared, say, to M.A., M.R.E., D.Min., Th.D., Ph.D., or lay education certificates. That will tell one not only of the way the school thinks about ministry, but about the nature of the school’s ministry itself.

With modest variations, these three factors--theology, education, and ministry--combine in distinctive ways to form the constituting religio-social ethos of an institution. It is in the mix that we find the peculiar values, commitments, norms, memories and expectations that form the moral and spiritual ecology, the “character” of the organizations of concern here.

The constituting ethos of a school is, oddly, simultaneously fragile and persistent. It always seems to be about to fall apart. Something of the character of a place is ever about to be lost in the dynamic flow of history as “time makes ancient good uncouth.” And yet, the continuities are remarkable. Change, when it occurs, is incremental, evolutionary, and extended by shifting or modulating the

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emphases that have gone before. Every leader knows that the sense of the future is aided by familiarity with the past; and that a continuing ethological analysis is required to see whether or not the deep inner guidance system and the *raison d'être* is intact, in need of repair, or capable of expansive development in some new direction or another.

Each faculty member must, in one way or another, contribute to that ethos—even if, essentially, as internal critic. If he or she does not contribute, the faculty member will be miserable or others will attempt to isolate that member. If several do not understand or approve the ethos, the mobilization of factions can be expected. And if many members oppose or corrupt or dismantle the ethos, the institution will die. People who are committed to the constituting vision will not support it.

It is a mistake in this regard, however, to think of the faculty only in the plural. It is the faculty in the singular, as a whole, and not only as an aggregation of individuals, that must be so constituted that the ethos is enhanced and made excellent. What a good hymnody does for the religious affectations, and what nuanced preaching and rich forms of worship do in the evocation of faith, a faculty does for the mind—including the capacity to discern which hymns to choose, and why, and which kinds of faith are worth holding and why. The faculty thereby must deal persuasively with the probable truth, justice and grade of that which the constitutive vision stands for.

It is necessary, therefore, not only to think of the faculty members (plural) as mentors and models, one by one; but to think for the faculty (singular) as mentor and model. Some years ago, when a young Dane, a fugitive from the 1960's, came to the Untied Theological College in Bangalore, India, seeking “a Christian guru,” the Principal, Russell Chandran, rather abruptly dismissed him. “If you want to find a guru, go to an ashram or a mut,” he said. “This is a Christian educational institution, we have a faculty.” I think he was right.

A faculty, of course, has to have instructors who are specialists in the key disciplines proper to theology (but I will not here rehearse the debates about whether a three- or a four-fold curriculum is the best; I think three). And these instructors have to be good if the ethos is to evoke quality work from the students. But a faculty needs more, for theology, education and ministry require more than the disciplines in their naked state, or even covered by the fig-leaves of piety.

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Every faculty has to have a counselor or two. People find their lives blocked up at various points, and they have problems. Besides, serious counseling involves spiritual, moral and vocational issues as well as psychological ones, and hence is proper to theological institutions.

Every faculty needs at least one statesman, or statesperson, one who can reconcile agendas, negotiate potential disputes and help establish the policies of the faculty with patient wisdom—a proper dimension of learning. Besides, a theology or education that renders no vision of normative polity is truncated.

Every faculty needs “wordsmiths,” those who can formulate inchoate feelings of a community that works together. (We had some terribly disruptive deaths in our faculty recently, and we needed “chaplains” who could pray and express our grief.) The power of the word in the living of the common life must be clear.

Every faculty needs the presence of resident radicals to prevent self-satisfied complacency. Ministry can easily become only priestly and lose its prophetic dimension, or even become a routine “leftism” that is no longer self-critical.

Every faculty needs at least one, and preferably several more than one, “scholar’s scholar”—those whose works will still be cited in 2050—for they set standards of careful research and sustained reflection that stretch all others in that direction. The intellectual love of God is central to theology and education.

Every faculty needs a couple of master teachers—those who evoke excitement about artfully presented serious ideas, and induce the love of learning among those who do not know how or why to learn things they do not already know or like. Enthusiasm is not contrary to theology, education or ministry.

Every faculty needs people with special ties to churches, denominations, ecumenical bodies, or other centers where the students are likely to carry out their ministries. No one would expect medical schools to be isolated from hospitals, or law schools from courts, or business schools from corporations.

There may be other things that a faculty needs, but this list indicates some of the functions, dynamics and competencies that have to be present in a Faculty viewed as a body which, as a whole, serves as the mentor and model for the next generation.

Of course, the ideal would be that each faculty member would be all of the above, and a “nice” person besides; but an entire faculty of nice generalists runs the risk of blandness, even of committing the gravest sin for theological education—being boring. The issues of theology are of such importance, interest and consequence for humanity that to serve up a bland menu in theological education is to visit iniquities unto the third or fourth generation.

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A much more creative alternative is to see the whole faculty as the mentor and model, with the whole consisting of a balanced conglomerate of a number of lopsided parts. Together, they constitute a “team” which can enhance theology, education and ministry in accord with the constitutional ethos.

The excellence of a faculty, viewed this way, would involve the quality of the team and the impact that it has, collectively, on students over time. The chief responsibility of seminary leadership, thus, would be to develop a theological vision akin to an artistic design, and on that basis, to cobble together combinations of people who can contribute excellency in his or her own field, stay in conversation with the whole and provide, often in odd blends, an indispensable function or two.

Of course there are dangers in this. Sometimes the parts simply will not blend; the results become similar to a failed effort at modern sculpture—not much different from a scrap heap. Also, it may be difficult to keep some superstars in their orbits—their own orbits, at least; while those who have grown weary are difficult to keep in any decent orbit at all. Indeed, developing a faculty as a mentoring unit is a bit like building a model of the Ptolemaic cosmos. There are many moving parts and finally it is never quite adequate to the realities.

Yet, a constant and profound discernment of the ethos and a theological vision of the whole can guide the selection, promotion and interactions of faculty members and weld them together with considerable artistry. The resulting enhanced ethos can itself become the decisive mentor.

And one can tell when it is well constructed: it will generate vitality; strengthen the weak, tutor the foolish, discipline the unbridled, and enliven the dead. Theological liveliness empowers novices to think big thoughts and to delight in chasing down small clues in pursuit of God’s truth, justice, and grace. It leaves a legacy as a model even when all members are gone. These are the measures of the faculty’s excellence.

It is possible, of course, to alter the constituting ethos of an institution—at least within limits—and thus to alter the governing model that mentors the next generation. Every search committee modulates it in some degree, although not always with the kinds of clear intentionality that could be exercised.

New degree programs or new emphases within them bring greater change over time, as we can see in newer accents on urban ministries, globalization, ethics and the professions, or ministries related to the arts, for examples (all themes dear to my heart). However, change is usually incremental—preparation for urban ministries begins to replace accents on the rural church, missiology takes a distinctly cosmopolitan turn, focus on the work ethic becomes a theological ethic for the dominant vocations of complex civilizations (medicine, law, business, technology),

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and hymn singing is broadened to include the way in which the several auditory and visual arts opens horizons of spiritual understanding. Each emphasis modulates the inner constitution of an institution and requires a new balance of persons, skills, and interactions.

For most Protestant seminaries, the most striking developments of the twentieth century have been in the practical areas. The Social Gospel with its focus on applied ethics, Clinical Pastoral Education with its concern for person to person counseling, Field Education with its emphasis on administration and supervision, and Liberation Theology with its emphasis on *praxis* have modified the ethos of most institutions.

All of these have emphasized the importance of “hands-on” educational engagement and the necessity of having a theology that helps *do* things. These programs were designed, essentially, for relatively young people with good college educations, but with limited practical backgrounds and little experience of the “real world.” These taught them how to cope with the tough realities of life. In many places, these accents will surely continue to expand.

But, as everyone knows, theology, education, and ministry is changing again. Today’s students come increasingly from minority communities or from other careers, and often have more experience of the harsh realities of life, more means of coping with practical issues, and a good bit of “hands-on” expertise. What they do not have, because it is less and less a part of college and of cultural consensus, is a way of comprehending what it all means. What we learned in the twentieth century, among other things, is that while experience is necessary to learning, experience by itself does not teach us much. Experience has to be interpreted to discover its significance, and interpretation is impossible without a framework of meaning that is larger than our particular experiences.

What may well be increasingly needed as we approach the next century is a renewed amplitude of theological and education understanding—a sense of the depth, width, breadth, and length of those matters that are trans-contextual, multi-cultural, and not “merely” practical. Further, the shrinking of the world, the inevitable encounter of religions and cultures, and the relative incapacity of secularist systems of philosophy to guide modern civilization invites us to think of how we might need to modulate theological education once more.

I personally would not be surprised if the new accents on “spirituality” (admitting that a good bit of it is old paganism), on the universalistic ethics of human rights (admitting that much of the discourse about this is ignorant of its theological roots) and the amazing growth of evangelical Christianity (admitting that many branches of it are morally shallow) did not signal a new quest for con-

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text-transcending and non-historicist frameworks of meaning. We may well see a new appreciation for what can be identified as a separation of religion and sub-culture—a celebration of the “trans-contextual,” an honoring of that kind of “holy homelessness” that does not read the significance of what people have to say according to their genetic or social background, and an appreciation of those “divine abstractions” by which all sorts of particularities are sorted.

Indeed, I think it is only a matter of time before Plato, the Stoics, and even Descartes and the Enlightenment—not to mention the great advocates of “perennial philosophy” from non-Western cultures—become rehabilitated as potential conversation partners of Christian theology. They will be seen as newly important precisely because they tried to articulate in coherent terms the intuitions of the universal, the constant and the absolute that is as much present in every profound apprehension of the holy as is awareness of the particular, the historical, and the conditioned.

It is, of course, close to heresy to harbor such views in many circles today; but a wider view of theology suggests that reform often takes place by the recovery and recasting of what has been neglected or unduly repudiated by a previous generation. Today, theological educational leadership will have to decide whether it should begin to facilitate another possible shift—against the obvious current tides by balancing them with this neglected dimension of theological thought.

In any case, these remarks have several implications for ministry. It presumes that the whole faculty serves as mentor by what it comprehends and balances so that it can prepare the next generation of leadership to be, essentially, a theologian in residence among the people of God. He or she may serve in the congregation, in the hospital as chaplain, in the college or school as teacher, among the troubled as counsellor, or in the halls of congress or among the dispossessed as advocate. But whatever the location, the minister is to be a one-person faculty at the grass-roots, interpreting Scripture and the tradition, aiding systematic thinking about normative issues and developing applied skills among all called to ministry to others.

This means that the faculty must not only have the internal commitment to be, together, a mentor; but that it should understand its role as model. It also means that theological education must seek the kinds of students who would be able to take on this role of theologian in residence and carry it out with excellence. (There are important implications for ecclesiological reform and for continuing education here also; but we cannot go into them at the moment.)

Here it should be suggested that the divinity schools most closely related to the

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great universities have a special role. They have to persuade the academics in the non-theological disciplines that theology has something important to offer modern academia that is not already found in philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science, economic analysis, or cultural and literary studies—which the university, for the most part, does better than the seminary. And they have to persuade the best students in the universities that the most exciting ideas, the highest levels of scholarship, the people with the greatest moral and spiritual integrity, and the most profound realities of life can be found in theology.

With future faculty members and candidates for ministry formed with such a background, the seminary can do what it was designed to do (rather than being remedial college, a therapy center, a political cadre, or even a worship center). It can prepare theologians of tomorrow to live and work among the peoples of God with confidence and competence.

ENDNOTES

¹ M.L. Stackhouse, with Nantawan Boonprasat-Lewis, J.G.F. Collison, Lamin Sanneh, Leander Harding, Ilse von Loewenclau and Robert Pazmino, *Apologia: Globalization, Contextualization and Mission in Theological Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishers, 1988).

² Roy I. Sano, “Theological Faculties as Mentors of Ministers for the Church,” *Theological Education* (Spring, 1990), pp. 11-34.

FACULTY AS MENTORS AND MODELS

Frederick H. Borsch

When in the 1970s I was Dean and President of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, I liked to try to surprise people who asked me what my biggest problem was. They assumed it might be money or perhaps an insufficient number of able students. “No,” I said. “My biggest problem is finding qualified faculty.”

Since CDSP had a fine faculty and there were more than a few applicants for our openings, my inquirers asked me to explain. I pointed out that, in one way or another, our faculty position descriptions regularly asked for four areas of competence if not distinction: 1) competence in a theological discipline and in theology more broadly, with a record of contribution to scholarship or the potential so to do; 2) good teaching ability; 3) a capacity to work well with faculty colleagues and to care about students, in some sense acting as pastor and/or mentor to them; 4) faith commitment.

This was, of course, a lot to ask from any one person and there had to be some sense of give and take in assessing qualifications and capacities. The best scholar might not be a good teacher, and so forth. There was not a large pool of potential faculty who could rate highly in all these areas.

We could profitably spend our time today talking about these areas of faculty competence and character, and their interrelationships in the 1990s. But I want to complicate matters further for us by bringing into discussion four other closely related issues, which I am looking at from the perspective of the larger church as well as the theological academy.

1) Let me begin, at least for argument’s sake, with an attack on the highly individualistic character of theological education. Many lay and clergy leaders complain about the so-called “lone ranger” model of much of the ordained ministry. They are concerned that a number of clergy are not good at being team players with their peers or their lay leaders—that they are too often competitive with one another and sometimes experience considerable loneliness in their work and lives.

A highly developed individualism, with both its benefits and problems, is, of course, an often commented upon feature of our society.¹ Indeed, our political discourse, both on the left and right, seems dominated by individualistic values and contractarian views of society. When values are spoken of, the “left” seems mainly concerned with individual rights or the individual rights of particular groups. The “right” today often concentrates on a populist emphasis on individual economic rights. Both parts of the spectrum give relatively little place to the more communitarian aspects of their heritage. Once I was making this point to a group of

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business leaders who challenged me as to why this wasn't all to the good. I asked them if these were the only qualities that were of value for their companies. They quickly responded regarding the importance of the counterbalancing virtues of cooperation, teamwork, willingness to help the other. But how much of this, I wondered with them, is learned or formed in our educational system?

In the humanities and the social sciences this individualistic mode tends to remain true throughout graduate education. The modeling and mentoring most theological faculty have received has been of this kind.

While I was the Dean of CDSP, I recall how, during a faculty gathering that was meant to be devoted to theological discourse, the conversation turned once again to curricular and administrative matters. "Why," I blurted out in frustration, "do we spend so little time talking about our faith in God or why we believe in the resurrection?" After a rather embarrassed silence, one of the older and wiser faculty said, "Fred, it's because we don't trust each other enough."

At first I didn't want to admit he was right, but gradually I and others of us realized the truth in his response and began to make efforts to build our levels of trust and sharing.

Later in my life, when teaching in the university, I was, however, struck by the contrast I observed in the educational processes in several of the so-called "hard" sciences. There, at least in good measure because of the nature of the work and discipline, one frequently saw teams of senior and junior professors, graduate students and sometimes bright undergraduates, often along with laboratory assistants, working together—sometimes, with lights blazing and occasional laughter from one of the science buildings, until late into the night.

I was jealous. I hadn't been educated that way, and I fear that is still true for most who teach in the humanities, including theology.

My point of concern is to ask to what degree this individualistic modeling, carried over by the faculty of seminaries and theological schools, effects the ministry and teaching styles of those being taught. Do faculty show themselves capable of good teamwork, cooperation and willingness to sacrifice for the larger good? In what measure does a lack of such teamwork and common vision also contribute to the fragmentation of the theological curriculum? To the degree that this cooperative spirit is lacking, what steps might be taken, both among current faculty and in the education of the next generation of teachers, to encourage and support a more complementary, community and team oriented style?

2) There has been considerable valuable discussion recently about the importance of focusing on communities of faith, rather than the individual, as the context in which faith is learned, nurtured and practiced. We may expect that most seminary and theological school faculty will be knowledgeable about and have

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experienced several different types of such communities and be concerned to reflect with students on how faith is formed and expressed within them.

Surely the seminary or theological school is also a community of faith of its own kind and with its own purposes and integrity. How do faculty join and support such a community and serve in it as models to and with their students and its other members?

3) Following H. Richard Niebuhr, James Gustafson has maintained that seminaries and theological schools should understand themselves as “intellectual centers” for theology.² They should be more than conservers and interpreters of the lore of the faith. The questions and currents of modern life—issues having to do with the environment, war and peace, molecular biology, comparative religions, literature, and so forth should also be debated and reflected upon in the halls and classrooms.

I think Gustafson is right to hold that this is not primarily a question of adding to or changing courses in the curriculum. I regard it as far more a concern that there be faculty who are themselves vitally interested in such issues and willing to let them regularly effect their thinking about their theology and their discourse with students and faculty.

This is not an easy matter for me. Some of the best faculty I have known would rather have been lost among the saints and theologians of the fourth century or among the tribes of Israel. At times such a “lostness” is necessary for all scholarship, and I would not want somehow to rule it off campus.

Yet I believe it is also necessary that key members of the faculty, representatives of a variety of “fields”, be seen doing theology in a more public arena, as a more public form of discourse dealing with the issues, subjects and questions of our time. In this way students will be helped to learn how to do a more public form of theology.

4) I used to remind my students, and now sometimes remind the clergy, that we do not send them to seminary to learn how to be pastors and administrators. I do not mean that they cannot learn some important and useful things about these areas of ministry in seminary, but these skills can better be developed elsewhere and without the expense of a seminary education.

The primary purpose of a seminary education is to help students profoundly explore and understand theology in all its basic aspects and to learn to express and share their theological knowledge and understanding in their own ways. It is, of course, a systemic problem in the churches that so many clergy feel that the administrative and pastoral expectations of them leave little time for teaching and sharing their theological understandings in their faith communities. Edward Farley

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asks about the sad and even poignant results in all too many of our churches:

“Why is it that the vast majority of Christian believers remain largely unexposed to Christian learning—to historical-critical studies of the Bible, to the content and structure of the great doctrines, to 2,000 years of classical works on the Christian life, to the basic disciplines of theology, biblical languages and Christian ethics? Why do bankers, lawyers, farmers, physicians, homemakers, scientists, salespeople, managers of all sorts, who carry out all kinds of complicated tasks in their work and home, remain at a literalist, elementary-school level in their religious understanding? How is it that high-school-age church members move easily and quickly into the complex world of computers, foreign languages, DNA and calculus, and cannot even make a beginning at historical-critical interpretation of a single text of scripture?”³

There is, of course, no way theological faculties can correct this serious lack by themselves, but we can expect teachers of theology to be deeply concerned with the problem. They should help students and others understand and analyze the problem and seek ways to challenge and overcome it. Together with their students and with clergy and lay leaders they can try to develop styles and approaches which will allow congregations to become “schools of faith” and centers for public theological inquiry and reflection at appropriate levels.

I believe such adult education is essential for so much that the churches are called to do: for the education of young people, for evangelism, for identifying and understanding service opportunities and motivating people for them, for facing the critical ethical issues of the day, for stewardship. By understanding this need and opportunity, and in some cases by themselves showing how such teaching can be done, theological faculty can offer one of their greatest gifts to students. They can help teach and motivate them to be teachers of theology and teachers of teachers in the faith communities they will lead in the years to come.

Let me summarize how I hope that theological faculty might be still more helpful to their students and future church leaders:

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*by becoming themselves more team oriented and interested in cooperative support in their own teaching and faculty styles;

*by developing their understanding of how faith is passed on and strengthened and used in communities of faith, and by knowing themselves as participants in one such community;

*by seeing themselves as participants in intellectual centers of theology, concerned to encourage a more public form of theological discourse;

*by encouraging the development of more effective theological education for all Christians.

ENDNOTES

¹. For a discussion of the contractarian understanding of society, past and present, and some of the alternatives, see Frank G. Kirkpatrick, *Community: A Trinity of Models* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1986).

². See James M. Gustafson's, "The vocation of the Theological Educator", in *Theological Education*, Supplement 1987, pp. 53-68.

³. Edward Farley, *The Fragility of Knowledge, Theological Education in the Church and the University* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) p. 92.

FACULTY AS SCHOLARS AND TEACHERS

Richard Mouw

When Mark Noll interviewed Jaroslav Pelikan for a *Christianity Today* article on Pelikan's scholarly contribution, he asked the Yale historian to compare the scholarly moods of the Christian and the secular academic contexts. Pelikan's comments about the plight of church-employed academics were not very encouraging. "You have to give the church what it needs," he responded, "not what it wants. And in order to do that you have to leave its payroll. It hurts me to say this because I want to be part of a church where that doesn't have to be said. But show me one where it is not true."¹

While there are obvious exceptions to Pelikan's generalization, there is some legitimacy in his portrayal of churchly scholarship. We church-sponsored scholars have not consistently done a good job of addressing the real needs of our three "publics"--the church, the academy, and society. And this failure has in turn impoverished Christian educational institutions and their supporting constituencies. Disciplined scholarly investigation is crucial to our own health as a Christian community.

But suppose we were to do a better job as theological seminaries at providing our publics with a Christian scholarship that engages crucial human concerns. What would this healthy seminary scholarship look like? I will not provide a comprehensive answer to this important question here; but I will set forth three observations that seem to me to be relevant to our continuing attempts to see to it that our seminaries function as vital intellectual centers.

My first observation is this: *There is no single generic pattern for the ways in which seminaries ought to structure their intellectual relationships to the three publics.* The appropriate modes of scholarly ministry will surely have something to do with our confessional identities and historical experiences. Catholic institutions experience their "publics" in very different ways than pietist-evangelical schools do; oldline Protestant divinity schools and Orthodox seminaries exhibit similar differences. But there is also much plurality *within* confessional groupings. Catholic scholars in university theology departments often address a very different agenda than their colleagues in small diocesan schools; the intellectual challenges faced by a free-standing multi-denominational evangelical seminary are not always the same as those experienced at Protestant schools with a strong denominational ethos. No uniform set of prescriptions will be adequate for these diverse settings and assignments.

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Second: *The community of seminaries does have a shared obligation to address all three publics.* I am tempted to argue that *each* seminary is obliged to address *each* of the publics. I am even tempted to argue that the obligation to address all of the publics rests on each seminary scholar. But I will put the case more modestly at this time. There is a collective obligation to address all of the publics, even if the task of each segment is not coextensive with the task of the whole. But even so, each segment--each seminary and each seminary scholar-- is required to see to it that the work of the whole gets done. In New Testament terms, the individual members of the Body have different gifts and callings, but all members together are responsible for supporting the gifts and callings of the whole Body. Furthermore, to concede that none of us as an individual member is obliged directly to address all three publics does not mean that anyone can comfortably focus on only one public. Too many lines connect the church and the academy and the public square to permit a myopic understanding of our individual callings.

My third observation: *Seminary scholarship and teaching must comport with the unique calling of the theological community.* Given the centrality of ministerial formation in the work of the seminary, it is fair to say that seminary scholarship and teaching must have a *ministry-related* focus.

To insist on the ministry-relatedness criterion is not necessarily to endorse a clericalist model of seminary education. "Ministry" must be understood in inclusive terms, as the broad patterns of service to which the people of God are called in the world. Ministry is not only teaching and preaching and counseling; it is also farming, banking, medicine, sales and parenting.

The ministry-relatedness criterion, then, places few restrictions on the actual topics that might fall within the proper scope of theological teaching and scholarship. What it does dictate is not a narrow subject matter but a certain kind of intentionality of focus. A Pauline scholar has every right to spend considerable time investigating, in a seminary context, issues pertaining to the dating of Galatians; but to justify such a focus she must be clear about the ways in which attention to this topic can strengthen the life and witness of the Christian community--and the same holds for studies of the role of envy in the psychology of Melanie Klein, or of the deliverances of the Synod of Dordrecht, or of ethnographic methodologies.

To acknowledge the ministry-relatedness criterion is to challenge the hegemony of the academic guilds in the realm of seminary teaching and scholarship. In saying this, however, I do not mean to be engaging in guild-bashing. The guilds of the academy are, after all, one of the important publics to which seminaries have an obligation. But there are other ways to fulfill this obligation than by simply allowing the guilds to set the agenda for our teaching and research. For one thing, we can acknowledge the intellectual concerns of the guilds as *suggestive* for our

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working without treating them as *normative*. For another, we must recognize the need to speak prophetically *to* the guilds.

This last comment deserves considerable expansion, but my remarks here can only be impressionistic. My sense is that while seminary scholars have paid much more attention to the need to speak *to* the church and *to* the public square we have thought little about how to speak *to* the academy. We have been more intimidated by the academic guilds than we have by our other two publics.

This is unfortunate. The guilds have much to teach seminary scholars--but they also have much to learn from us. I offer one case in point. Edward Farley is surely correct in his insistence that theology shares with philosophy “a preoccupation with mystery which resists partitioning.”² And theology has its own unique role to play in promoting a healthy sense of mystery in the intellectual quest. As Arthur Holmes has put it,³ the Christian faith provides us with the resources for approaching the fact of human cognitive diversity with these two complementary attitudes: epistemic humility and epistemic hope. We confess that only the Creator has a clear and comprehensive knowledge of all things. Thus the humility. But we also have received the promise that God will eventually lead us into that mode of perfect knowing that is proper to us as human creatures. Thus the hope. If we effectively appropriate these attitudes, we can display the kind of patience that is capable of tolerating complexities and living with seemingly unconnected particularities without giving into despair or cynicism. The academic guilds desperately need help in developing these cognitive attitudes today.

Furthermore, seminary scholars can draw upon uniquely Christian communal resources available for cultivating these virtues. We often do not pay serious enough attention to the epistemic benefits that come from involvement in the worldwide Body of Christ. The existing Christian international network provides theologians with easy access to a cross-cultural conversation intensified by a degree of spiritual bonding that is seldom available to university scholars whose global sensitivities are nurtured by the normal academic dialogic opportunities. The fact of this extensive Christian network seems to me to provide an important argument for encouraging theological scholars to maintain a strong churchly identity. And such an involvement has a crucial bearing on our contribution to the academy.

Professor Pelikan is right: we have to give the church what it really needs, and not simply what it wants. But this is also true in our dealings with the academy and with the larger human community. Being in the employ of the churches may sometimes make it difficult to pursue these obligations in effective ways. But that relationship also provides us with sensitivities and opportunities that are not available to other members of the academy.

ENDNOTES

- ¹. Mark Noll, "The Doctrine Doctor," *Christianity Today* (September 10, 1990), 26.
- ². Edward Farley, *The Fragility of Knowledge: Theological Education in the Church and the University* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), p. 118.
- ³. Arthur F. Holmes, *Contours of a World View* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983), p. 128.

FACULTY AS SCHOLARS AND TEACHERS

Barbara Brown Zikmund

The questions set for our reflections suggest the directions of my comments:

- What kinds of research should theological faculty conduct?
- What relationship should scholarship have to teaching?

These questions push me back to the prior question about the nature of theological education itself. We know what it is not, but we are still very ambiguous about what it is. Theological education is not simply graduate education in religious studies. Theological education is not merely indoctrination into the service of the church. Nor is theological education provided simply to meet the personal needs of persons who enroll as students.

I am very appreciative of Cobb's definition—theological education “engages in things that matter,” to us and ultimately to God. Theological education has an answer to the “so what?” question. We engage in theological education not simple because it is there, but out of our sense of calling to serve God.

Therefore, as I think about what we are doing as scholars and teachers in theological education I am more interested in what we actually do, than what we think we are. Do our scholarly efforts matter? ... Do faculty teach better because they engage in research and scholarship? ... Do students gain more? ... Do faculty grow? ... Do churches live more faithfully? ... Does society become more just and merciful? ... Does God's world turn out better?

As I thought about my own experience during almost ten years as an academic dean, I found myself answering these questions with self-conscious awareness as a woman in education. I realized that my research and scholarship (that is, my disciplined scholarly reflection and investigation) have been shaped by the emerging feminist critique of education and theology. Let me explain.

I begin with the assumption that faculty scholarship and research is a particular way of knowing something which strengthens a faculty member as teacher and Christian and citizen. Furthermore, faculty scholarship in *theological education* partakes of the canons of knowledge which are generally prevalent in our society, but (as Cobb says) it also takes the agenda in its own hands.

Many of you are familiar with the book *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind*, by Mary Field Belenky and three other women researchers (New York: Basic Books, 1986). The book reports on a study of depth interviews with 135 women and their journey towards self-knowledge. It describes

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five kinds of knowing, which as the preface puts it, “women have cultivated and learned to value, ways we have come to believe are powerful but have been neglected and denigrated by the dominant intellectual ethos of our time.” The authors further “describe the multitude of obstacles women must overcome in developing the power of their minds.” (p. ix)

As I examined my own journey into scholarly research and investigation, it struck me that the five “ways of knowing” described by Belenky and her colleagues in relationship to women’s experience, are five ways of knowing which inform my theological research and scholarship—and which I believe describe various forms of disciplined scholarly reflection and investigation used by many faculty in theological education.

The first way of knowing is through SILENCE. The authors recognize that our culture has a presupposition that language and naming are power and that silence is a sign of weakness or oppression. Therefore, women who are bright but silent do not think that they have anything to say. Every time a woman overcomes her commitment to silence, she develops a greater sense of self-worth.

My own experience of silence bears this out. I was a quiet young girl. Church, however, was a place which was ready to listen to me and to other women. In the history of the church women’s groups have literally, “heard women into speech,” to quote the wisdom of Nelle Morton. This is very important, because when women do not say anything, as time passes women do not think that they have anything of value to say. At the same time, women also recognize wisdom in silence. Many women have learned how to reclaim silence as a new kind of power.

Theological research and scholarship suffer from low self-worth in our secular society. We do not think that anyone wants to hear what we have to say, we doubt that anyone will listen. In order to “hear us into speech,” the first step in supporting theological scholarship is to provide arenas where we can speak out about our work and strengthen our self-worth. The American Academy of Religion, Society for Biblical Literature, society for Christian Ethics, College of Homiletics, etc. are all important because they break the silence. It is also imperative to speak and be heard closer to home, allowing scholarly research to be verbalized and publicized within local seminaries and divinity school departments.

Obviously theological research and investigation needs to move beyond silence. However, in theological education there are some times when we actually choose to remain silent—not because we cannot speak, but because we choose not to speak in order to honor the reality about which we do our teaching, research and scholarship—the One beyond all speech. As scholars of religious life and faith there is a time of speak and a time to remain silent.

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The authors of the book *Women's Ways of Knowing* see silence as the least valued method of knowing. Women who rely exclusively on silence are developmentally limited. It may be, however, that in theological education—in our teaching, scholarship and research—silence must always remain one of the most valued and legitimate ways of knowing.

A second way of knowing is RECEIVED KNOWLEDGE. Here words become central to knowing. The women explain that they learn by listening, sifting right and wrong. They have little confidence that they ought to say much, but they actively listen. “Believing truth comes from others, they still their own voices to hear the voices of others.” (p. 37) They look to authorities, not friends, and equate receiving retaining, returning the words of authorities with learning.

Sometimes theological scholarship and research gets stuck in this way of knowing. Theologians write for theologians. Theology becomes preoccupied with received texts, doctrines, traditions, and practices. Scholarship is overly concerned with what others think and say and write.

I recognize that theological educators are conservatives—conserving the tradition and passing it on to the next generation. Good theological scholarship, however, must go beyond received knowledge and break new ground. To quote my own Congregational heritage, “there is yet more light to break forth from God’s holy word.”

The third way of knowing in the cycle of women’s experience is SUBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE. Subjective knowledge is in reaction against both silence and received knowledge. An affirmation of subjective knowledge comes when women finally find their own voices, trusting in their own feelings, instincts and intuitions. With subjective knowledge truth is very personal and private, rejecting everything beyond individual experience.

Theological research and scholarship can also become captive to this mind set as well. We all know those who reject tradition and dogma and insist that the only legitimate religious authorities are personal and private. In some circles people speak about the ultimate authority of the inner voice of God. Others dwell upon the power of the Holy Spirit to guide their every decision and shape their work.

The dangers here are obvious. Carried to its logical conclusion exclusive loyalty to subjective knowledge leads to relativism. It becomes more and more difficult to share one’s faith, except as private opinion. If theological faculties are scholars and teachers sharing common traditions and expounding the claims of communal authorities, subjective knowledge is not enough. Although subjective knowledge may lead people to discover the power of personal knowledge beyond what

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one has been told, it undermines the capacity of teacher/scholars to do anything more than share an opinion.

The fourth way of knowing is PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE. Here the women move beyond received and subjective knowledge to reasoned reflection. Procedural knowledge works with ideas, using reason to make them understandable, objective and sharable. When women feel comfortable enough with themselves to give and accept criticism, and to question authorities using objective criteria, they have embraced procedural knowledge.

Disciplined scholarly reflection and investigation by theological faculties is often expressed as procedural knowledge. In fact some of the most significant breakthroughs in biblical and theological scholarship in the past century has been procedural or methodological. Yet sometimes scholars become preoccupied with methodology, probing how knowledge connects text and tradition, and losing sight of content. Theological scholarship which never gets beyond procedural debates is of limited use to faith communities, even if it gains the respect of academics.

The fifth way of knowing is called CONSTRUCTED KNOWLEDGE. Gradually some women arrive at the basic insight that all knowledge is constructed and that the knower is an intimate part of the known. (p. 137) The authors report that “Constructivist women aspire to work that contributes to the empowerment and improvement in the quality of life of others. More than any other group of women in the study, the constructivists feel a part of the effort to address with others the burning issues of the day and to contribute as best they can.” (p. 152)

Here is the most demanding and satisfying way of knowing in women’s intellectual pilgrimage. I also believe that constructed knowledge provides the highest model for excellence in theological scholarship and research, bringing together intellectual rigor and personal faith.

The writings of the Cornwall Collective, *Your Daughters Shall Prophesy: Feminist Alternatives in Theological Education* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1980) challenged many of the unexamined assumptions of contemporary theological education, arguing that the university model of education clustered into disciplines sustained by professional guilds was not enabling religious leadership. It makes the case that theological scholarship (for faculties and students) most authentically grows out of settings of mutuality in which persons are enabled to value and to name their own experiences, learn from them and move towards new understanding in the light of their own authority and of cooperative power relations (p. 7). This is constructed knowledge.

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In conclusion, I believe that faculties within theological education need to be encouraged in their disciplined scholarly reflection and investigation to explore, move through and claim all five ways of knowing—from silence, to received knowing, to subjective knowing, to procedural knowing, to constructed knowing. Only theological scholarship which explores the entire cycle will be adequate to meet the needs and the standards of the academy, of vital faith communities, and of individuals in search of truth.

THE GRADUATE EDUCATION OF FUTURE THEOLOGICAL FACULTIES

James H. Evans, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

One of the things which became clear to me as I contemplated participation in this consultation and addressing the issue which is before us is that it is highly speculative. How can one possibly know what faculties ought to look like in the decades ahead? The face of both religious communities, the social and intellectual world which they inhabit are changing at a breath taking rate. One aspect of this change is that theological schools, denominationally controlled schools, free-standing schools, and university divinity schools are confronting demands relative to both their relevance to their major constituencies and to their financial viability. Thus at a deep level, survival is a key issue in the life of theological schools. There is also a deeper intellectual issue to be considered in relation to the life of theological schools that may have an impact on their perceived needs in reconstructing their faculties.

The crisis in theological education which concerns us has simmered for decades, finding expression in a very few isolated books and articles. Usually this concern was appended to broader considerations of the meaning of theological discourse. However, the late 1970s and early 1980s signalled an intense and somewhat unique concern with the discursive practices of theological education as an issue in and of itself. It is my suspicion that the emergent crisis in theological education is related to a general cultural shift which has been referred to as postmodernism. While an extended discussion of this relationship falls outside the specific scope of our discussion, I want to mention some key features of postmodernism, as I understand it, as a backdrop to the problem of the graduate education of theological faculties.¹ Postmodernism is characterized by the conviction of the loss of center. That is, the cohesive paradigms of the past are no longer operative or adequate. This notion of the loss of center is a key contribution of Edward Farley in his book *Theologia*.² A second characteristic is the emergence of popular, eclectic styles in painting, poetry, architecture, and fashion. Third, there is a move from social contract to spiritual covenant as the basis for community. Fourth, knowledge is no longer defined in terms of propositions but in terms of narrative. I think that these observations are suggestive when one looks at the current state of the study of theology. The sense of the loss of community and common discourse; new, fresh, methodologies; the quest for more authentic forms

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of community; and the complementary nature of knowledge are signs within theological education of this shared concern. The remainder of my brief comments will focus on what I see to be the three major issues for theological faculties. Because my observations are grounded in personal experience, they may be somewhat limited. Because they are inferential and speculative, they may have a broader significance. One further proviso, because most of my teaching and administrative experience has been in a school where the M.Div. degree is the central focus, my observations may have more relevance to these types of institutions than to others.

THE HOMOGENEITY OF CURRENT THEOLOGICAL FACULTIES

In spite of efforts to change them, theological faculties are still fairly homogeneous. They are largely constituted by European-American males. Though the attempts to diversify theological faculties have been sincere in many cases, much remains to be done.

If we seek the causes of this condition, certain answers present themselves rather prominently. Inherited patterns of paternalism, racism and sexism have been major factors. In addition, however, we must also note that the expansion and contraction of theological faculties through the economic fluctuations of the recent past has often meant that the last hired were the first fired. Persons occupying the margins of administrations and faculties were most vulnerable. It has also meant that persons coming through these difficult times have had a "survivors" mentality. The "old boy" network in theological education has been based as much on the complexity of emotions and feelings associated with a shared history within the faculty, as on any need to protect privilege. In spite of the causes of the current state of theological faculties, they need to be diversified. Thus, there are significant challenges to be met. J. Deotis Roberts has suggested that the advent of the D.Min. degree has had a deleterious effect on the available pool of African American scholars for(?) the Ph.D. The emphasis of the D.Min. on reflection on ministerial practice had often been viewed as preferable to the isolation required to do the Ph.D. Further, in the African American community, pastors are often honored while scholars are not. For Latino students, the priority of the relation of the student to the gospel message to academic credentials, is symbolized by the question *Tiene Mensaje?* 'Does he or she have a message?' Thus, education which clarifies the relation of the student to the message is given priority. The required diversity, as Marjorie Suchocki suggests, is a prerequisite for excellence.³ This will require the

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intentional encouragement and training of potential faculty from underrepresented constituencies. This will require bold leadership in theological education, and in itself will portend the emergence of a progressive rather than surviving faculty.

THE ALIENATION OF CURRENT THEOLOGICAL FACULTIES

Although one could always point to exceptions, theological faculties are largely alienated from the very contexts for which they are training people, i.e., the ministry, however that may be construed. In most Protestant mainline seminaries faculty are required to have little or none of the experiences for which they are equipping others, i.e., the ministry. Why is this the case? At least part of the reason is professional ambivalence. This professional ambivalence is not the result of a lack of “practical” experience on the part of individual faculty members. The theory-praxis distinction—embattled and controversial as it is—does not get to the root of the issue. There is an *alienation of consciousness* which is the result of the cloistered nature of faculty existence within the seminary context. The relative security, freedom, and leisure afforded to theological faculties, especially those who are tenured, often stands in stark contrast to the pressures and lifestyles of the clergy. Clergy burnout and dropout continues to be a concern of judicatories, while, though faculty face their own difficulties, they do not share these same pressures. This alienation of consciousness manifests itself in a reluctance to take contextual issues seriously with the study and teaching of the disciplines in theology. The life context of the student is often minimized. The social, political and cultural contexts of the world from which the student comes and to which she goes is conspicuously absent in many classrooms. The intellectual and ethical contexts of various theological ideas are often declared inappropriate subject matter for theological study. When this is the case, faculties need to be reconnected. This ought to begin in the training of potential faculty. Many faculties, including that of my institution, are moving toward requiring immersion experiences in diverse cultural settings, as a necessary ingredient in theological education. It may be that such an experience, possibly including pastoral experience, needs to be a requirement for the granting of the Ph.D. in the theological disciplines. In any case, steps need to be taken to connect the study of theology to what David Kelsey called “living the faith.” In this way, questions critical for the future of theological education can be addressed. Should theological school faculty members have the M.Div. degree or be ordained? Is theological education primarily for the clergy class or is it for the whole church? Is professional formation or Christian formation the focus of theological education?

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CONFUSION ABOUT THE MEANING OF THEOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP

In many instances theological faculties are overburdened with heavy teaching loads. Yet, most faculties carry teaching responsibilities comparable to those of major research universities. At the same time, potential for the production of scholarship on the part of theological faculties remains untapped. In addition, significant amounts of scholarship are being produced by faculties with little or no constitutional commitment to the education of leadership for the churches. The source of this confusion has been a major concern of ATS in the past decade. What is theological scholarship and research? How does it differ from other kinds of scholarship and research? This issue needs to be addressed at the point of the training of future theological faculty. Theological education and its relation to the individual disciplines ought to be integral to Ph.D. training. Perhaps an area exam in theological education and its relation to the discipline in question, or a course in theological education as a disciplinary concern would address the issue. Research in theological education needs to be encouraged and valued at the dissertation stage as well as appropriate matter for faculty publications. This may require the formation of an interdisciplinary guild for theological educators. A supportive organization such as this would affirm theological education as a profession which pursues knowledge and puts it at the service of the religious communities, humanity, and the world.

THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Although persons interested in theological education may not agree on what it is, there is a consensus that excellence needs to be pursued in the building of future theological faculties. On an individual level excellence is a personal trait. It relates to vocation and desire and not simply to the contents of a curriculum vitae. Allow me to suggest two characteristics of excellence by referring to one of our national cult heroes, Michael Jordan, the professional basketball player. Michael has astounded basketball fans with his excellence on the court. He is excellent because of his ability to improvise *within the rules of the game*, while at the same time, extending the boundaries of custom, tradition, and expectation. That is, his play combines tradition and innovation. He is also excellent because of his ability to generate attention and excitement which attracts those who are unfamiliar with the game as well as lifelong basketball devotees. His play reminds us that there is a distinction between basic competencies and abilities and that thing called excellence. Excellence in a theological faculty is the ability to improvise, to adjust

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to changing intellectual environments while remaining true to the fundamental melodic theme that gives theological study its focus. At the group level it is the ability of the faculty to model community in such a way that it becomes apparent that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Excellence in theological education is always redefining itself, breaking and establishing new boundaries and expectations, yet never obscuring the integrity of its subject matter. This is suggested in the classical description of the church as “ecclesia semper reformanda” or the church always reforming itself. It may be that individual faculty members, as well as collective faculties, ought to be constantly engaged in self-reformation.

ENDNOTES

¹.See James H. Evans, Jr., “African-American Christianity and the Postmodern Condition”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. LVIII, No. 2 (Summer 1990):207-222.

².Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education*. Fortress Press: Philadelphia, PA. 1983.

³.Marjorie H. Suchocki, “Theological Foundations for Ethnic and Gender Diversity in Faculties or Excellence and the Motley Crew”, *Theological Education*, Volume XXVI, No. 2, (Spring 1990):35-50.

THE GRADUATE EDUCATION OF FUTURE THEOLOGICAL FACULTIES: A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

Richard P. McBrien

I've been asked to reflect on the graduate education of future theological faculties from a Catholic perspective, that is, in light of the current state of Catholic graduate education and the challenge of providing for the academic preparation of Catholic theologians.

Within the brief space allotted to me, I can't hope to do more than offer a few facts, a few ideas, and a couple of general recommendations. For those who would like to have a more complete statement on the subject, I recommend an important article by my colleague, Thomas F. O'Meara, Warren Professor of Theology at Notre Dame, entitled, "Doctoral Programs in Theology at U.S. Catholic Universities."¹

It might be useful to underscore some pertinent facts here at the outset; namely, that Catholics constitute almost one-fourth of the entire U.S. population; that Catholics are by far the largest single denomination of Christians in the United States; that Catholics are often the largest single grouping of students in U.S. graduate and doctoral programs in theology; and that among the 1600 independent institutions of higher education in America, some 800 of which are considered to be church-affiliated, Catholic institutions constitute the largest single group. (There are 235 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States.)

Let me turn, then, to the question at hand: the graduate education of future faculty, with special reference to the situation of Catholics.

The education of U.S. Catholic theologians has changed decisively over the past several decades. Before the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962, almost every Catholic theologian was an ordained priest who had been educated in seminaries before ordination and who went on to doctoral studies at pontifical universities after ordination.

Upon completion of their doctoral education, the "cream of the crop" taught in seminaries, while the rest taught in Catholic colleges and universities, as part of a theological faculty that, for the most part, possessed no graduate degrees in theology. Theology departments in those institutions were often staffed by religious order priests who had been trained in other disciplines but who, for various reasons, didn't remain in those disciplines. The real centers of theology were the seminaries (places like the Jesuit theologate at Woodstock in Maryland, the Dominicans' Aquinas

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Institute in Dubuque, Our Lady of the Lake Seminary in nearby Mundelein, Illinois, St. John's Seminary in Brighton, Massachusetts, St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, New York, and so forth), as well as The Catholic University of America.

I am reminded here of another article that might be useful for those of you who would like to have a better understanding of the state of Catholic theology before Vatican II. The article is by Charles Davis, "Theology in Seminary Confinement."² His thesis is that, over the centuries, theology has been significantly shaped by the environments in which it has been done: the bishop's house, the monastery, the university, the seminary. Theology, therefore, has been, by turns, pastoral, ascetical, speculative, and clerical. In this article, Davis speaks of an "ecology of theology," and warns against the limitations imposed on theology by a too-exclusive confinement to seminaries.

In the decade or so after the council future teachers of Catholic theology went frequently to places like Paris, Munich, Tübingen, Münster, and Cambridge, in addition to Louvain and the pontifical universities in Rome. These future priest-theologians were now being joined by religious women (nuns) and an increasing number of lay men and lay women, whose interest in theology had been ignited by the council and by post-conciliar theological developments.

From the early 1970s, as a wider spectrum of Catholics were drawn to the academic study of theology in the aftermath of the council, aspiring Catholic theologians set Europe aside and turned instead to American universities. Father O'Meara points out in his article that in 1968 there were over 50 Americans studying at the University of Munich, where O'Meara himself had received his doctorate, while in 1978 there were less than five.

A new generation of American Catholics, without the background of a 6-year seminary education based on the Latin manuals, were deterred from Europe for at least three reasons: (1) the need to master a foreign language; (2) cultural alienation; and (3) a sense of separation from the rapidly changing U.S. church and society. With a new emphasis on the importance of theology's context, this younger generation wanted to remain where the action was—ecclesiastically, academically, and societally—and where they would be doing their own theological work throughout their academic careers.

Accordingly, the shift in U.S. Catholic theology from before the council to the present has been threefold: *expansion*, i.e., more and more Catholics (lay, religious, and clergy) being drawn into the academic study of theology, *declericalization*, i.e., fewer and fewer clergy in relationship to laity and religious women, and *Americanization*. It is the latter characteristic that I want to focus upon now.

More and more, future Catholic theologians not only do not attend *European* universities; they also do not attend *Catholic* universities for their doctoral

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education. They have turned to the prestigious secular and non-Catholic institutions in the United States: Yale, Harvard, Chicago, Duke, Princeton, Emory, Vanderbilt, and Union Theological Seminary in New York, for example. Their decisions have been based not only on the undoubted quality of the faculties and programs in these institutions; but these young Catholic scholars also have an eye on their own future academic careers. They have made a judgment that they would be in a far stronger position to win a future faculty appointment with a degree from one of those schools in the United States than a degree from The Catholic University of America, Marquette, Boston College, Duquesne, Fordham, St. Louis, or Notre Dame. Canada, of course, has offered an attractive doctoral program at St. Michael's, Toronto.

Unfortunately, the quality of these Catholic doctoral programs has not risen dramatically or uniformly in the past 10 years. I do believe that Notre Dame is an exception to the rule, but I am constrained not to say more than that lest my words appear to be self-congratulatory. On the other hand, the reputation of The Catholic University of America, in the aftermath of the Curran affair, seems to have declined over the same period of time. I say this without any desire to gloat or to take a competitor's pleasure in CUA's plight. On the contrary, the injury done to CUA by the dismissal of Charles Curran from the theological faculty has had an impact on the whole U.S. Catholic theological community. Some of the other doctoral programs are either too new, too small, too little focused, too poorly funded, or too little endowed with faculties of sufficient breadth and depth.

So what is a young Catholic to do if he or she is interested in pursuing a theological degree with an eye to teaching someday in a college or university? Some of the most gifted graduate students see no practical alternative to attending one of the so-called prestige schools beyond the network of Catholic higher education.

Now many, one might even say most, of these Catholics will eventually teach in *Catholic* schools. According to a recent report in *The Directory of Departments and Programs of Religious Studies in North America*, published by the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion, Catholic departments of theology average about 60 percent of faculty with degrees from Catholic institutions and 40 percent with doctoral degrees from non-Catholic institutions. On the other hand, the faculty of Protestant departments average 97 percent of faculty with degrees from non-Catholic institutions and only 3 percent from Catholic institutions. State universities with religion departments are overwhelmingly Protestant, with only 5 percent of the faculty holding doctorates from Catholic theologates³.

Accordingly, this seems to be the present situation: most Catholic theologians will teach in Catholic schools, but having been educated at non-Catholic schools

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and with little or no formal academic background in Catholic theology. (We have to keep in mind here that, with the clericalization of Catholic theology after the Second Vatican Council, we no longer can presuppose the 6-year seminary education that almost every Catholic candidate for a doctorate would have had at the beginning of his studies).

Thomas O'Meara describes this situation as "paradoxical." He writes: "The diploma from a non-Catholic school is prestigious, while the theological education provided by that school may be personally abstract and professionally less practical."⁴

O'Meara seems to anticipate an obvious counter-argument that theology done in an ecumenical way is preferable to a theology done in a narrowly confessional way. "Theology," he replies, "can be ecumenical only if it is first the theology of a vital church. The difficulty with doctoral programs at most private and state universities is that they are not ecumenical but non-denominational... While espousing an ecumenical approach, the general theological tradition in these institutions" is such that "Catholic students there as a matter of course learn more of Jonathan Edwards and Schleiermacher than of Origen, Catherine of Siena and Yves Congar."⁵

O'Meara and others of us believe that we may be nearing "a state of emergency" in Catholic theological life in the United States. First, there are too few Catholic doctoral programs, and too few of *them* are adequately funded and staffed. Secondly, theology departments in Catholic institutions have not always striven for excellence at the undergraduate level, so that there aren't so many available teaching positions as there should be. Thirdly, while an ecumenical education is now normal, utterly desirable, and even essential, an education largely in terms of Calvinist or liberal Protestantism cannot be normal or desirable for all future Catholic teachers and scholars in theology. "The Catholic education of future theologians is the foundation of every other aspect of Catholic education," O'Meara insists⁶.

Another fellow Catholic theologian, David Tracy, of the University of Chicago, has identified three publics of theology in his book, *The Analogical Imagination: the Church, the academy, and society*. I would agree that the Catholic theologian must be prepared, at least in principle, to address all three publics, even if not with equal degrees of competence and intensity.

On the basis of my own experience as a Catholic theologian who was initially educated in a seminary and who received his doctorate at a pontifical university in Rome, I can readily testify that before Vatican II, Catholic theology was, as Charles Davis described it, too much in seminary confinement. For all practical purposes, pre-Vatican II Catholic theology had only one public: the Church (with an emphasis on its institutional and hierarchical aspects). It seemed to care much

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less about society, and almost nothing at all about the academy.

But if Catholic theological education, especially before Vatican II, was too much focused on the Church and too little or not at all on the academy and society, it may also be the case that theology done in universities and colleges outside the Catholic tradition has often labored under the opposite difficulty: it is focused almost entirely on the academy, to a lesser extent on society (although since Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr, who really listens?), and it is focused too little on the church.

And that brings us back to the point Thomas O'Meara and others of us have raised. Catholic doctoral students will, for the most part, find their future teaching positions in Catholic universities and colleges. And yet so many of them are receiving their entire theological education from those who have little or no ecclesial understanding of, or abiding interest in, Catholicism. What should be done?

There are two obvious courses of action: (1) With some new and vigorous leadership at the presidential level, of the sort that Father Theodore M. Hesburgh gave us at Notre Dame, we Catholics can expand and strengthen our own doctoral programs in theology so that we might offer our future Catholic theologians an academically reputable and realistic alternative to the Yales, the Harvards, the Chicagos, and the like; or (2) Others of us can do something about the ecumenical composition of doctoral curricula and faculties in these non-Catholic institutions so that young Catholic scholars might have more sustained exposure to their own Catholic tradition while, at the same time, reading Edwards and Schleiermacher, Barth and Tillich, Hegel and Heidegger, and the rest of the required canon.

The Catholic in me says that we ought not to pose this as an either/or proposition. We can, and ought to, do both. The quality of theological education in the Twenty-first century depends upon what we do now, in this last decade of the Twentieth century, in this last decade indeed of the Second Christian Millennium.

ENDNOTES

¹Thomas F. O'Meara, "Doctoral Programs in Theology at U.S. Catholic Universities," *America* 162 (February 3, 1990): 79-80, 82, 101-103.

²Charles Davis, "Theology in Seminary Confinement," *The Downside Review* 265 (October 1963): 307-316.

³Cited by Matthew Lamb, "Will There Be Catholic Theology at U.S. Catholic Universities?" *America* 162 (May 26, 1990): 525.

⁴O'Meara, 84.

⁵O'Meara, 84, 101.

⁶O'Meara, 103.

LOOKING AHEAD AT THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Craig Dykstra

Looking ahead—at least very far—is a perilous undertaking. We cannot *see* the future; we can only anticipate it. And even this is difficult to do in times of dizzying change.

In the past few weeks I've spent more time in museums than I usually do. We visited my mother in Detroit over spring break and took in a museum visit there. Then I accompanied my wife and her school colleagues as we shepherded a group of 65 eighth-graders through Washington for four days. It was intriguing to me that many of the exhibits I saw not only in the Smithsonian's Art and Space Museum but also in the Museum of American History displayed histories that have largely taken place in my own life-time. The differences between even the mid-1940s and now on so many fronts—transportation, labor, race, technology, world politics—are so great as to be breathtaking, and I'm only about half-way through my fifth decade. Go back 100 years and we seem to live in a different world.

You've all heard speeches about how unexpected the breakthrough in Eastern Europe seemed at the time. You've probably made that speech yourself. One would need to have been a close and careful reader of both the hidden and the obvious to have anticipated those events. And that is another reason why looking ahead is not easy. What creates the future that soon becomes history is an extremely complex interplay of forces and freedoms, trajectories and inertias combined with fresh visions and energies—all of which becomes the mysterious combination of the expected and the surprising that constitutes a new day.

To see into the next days is hard enough when the pace is rapid and the forces with which we have to deal are extraordinarily complex. But it becomes almost impossible when we are afraid. Rapid, complex change makes us all feel vulnerable. We sit uneasily in the rocking and rolling of history, which does little to cast out fear. In the face of threat, it is hard to see straight. When the means for our long-term existence are not readily at hand, our muscles tense, our teeth clench, and our eyes narrow. This is true for us as individuals, and it is true of institutions. Fear places us on a limited horizon, and vistas then darken.

Rapid change, considerable complexity, and a measure of anxiety all characterize the situation of theological education today. You know the names of the changes as well or better than I do: For some, especially Catholics, significant enrollment declines. For others, especially Evangelicals, significant enrollment increases. For almost all, the addition of major new programs, from the D.Min., to new masters degree programs, to new certification programs, to expanded

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continuing education, to new lay education programs. Further, whether the numbers have changed or not, the composition of the student body probably has. In some schools, women now constitute about half the student body and a significant portion of the faculty. Even 15 years ago their presence was still rare. Many campuses are now much more ethnically and racially diverse than they once were. And most are composed of faculties and student bodies whose church traditions are quite varied and whose theological points of view may be even more so.

Theological schools have changed in many ways over a short period of time. Most of these changes portend more change ahead. I see little to indicate that the shifts we have experienced are likely to lead to a period of settling down. Just the opposite, for these changes are the result in part of larger, more complex changes still taking place in our churches and society. We have adapted to some of these by creating additional programs and by incorporating into our institutions a more diverse body of participants. But the process has heretofore largely been one of addition—or subtraction—not yet qualitative, fundamental reorientation.

Whether or not a more profound kind of change still awaits us is not clear, but I suspect we all suspect it may well be. We have a gnawing sense that we are yet in for something, whose shape we cannot see. And that, combined with the ever-present concern for garnering the fiscal resources required to maintain institutional life at all, creates a situation of anxiety. One seminary President described how the financial problem can immobilize a school's capacity to anticipate the future with a sense of creativity. "The fiscal anxieties of this decade," he said, "have had the unfortunate, inevitable consequence...of cutting the nerve of much educational planning on the part of both the board and the faculty. Who can plan for a future that is not likely to come?"¹ As Robert Lynn, my predecessor, has put it recently, this situation tests our integrity. He says that "if this worrisome trend continues throughout [this] decade, one can expect some schools to be seduced into a promiscuous search for new programs that will attract tuition-paying students...Seminary 'marketing and planning research' could become the fashion of the 1990s much as development strategy was 'the' discovery a decade or so ago."²

In a context of vulnerability, we search for—and often find—ways to cope with change and complexity. But in order really to "look ahead"—not only in the sense of seeing what's coming before it hits us but also in the sense of a wise and willing anticipation of new days which we ourselves may play some role in shaping—for that we need something more than coping strategies. We need a place to stand.

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To me, having a place to stand, in the midst of change, complexity and anxiety requires three things:

- (1) knowledge of where we've come from;
- (2) a knowledge of the whole we are part of; and
- (3) deep convictions about what is most real and of most worth.

Where one has a place to stand built on these elements, one can see ahead in the sense of seeing deeply enough into the present to be able to follow out its implications for the future and to participate in some valuable though perhaps small way in making that future.

When we think about where the theological schools represented by you here today come from, we have to recall a fairly extended period of institution building that took place in the 18th and especially in the 19th century—a few cases well into the 20th century—in the United States and Canada. Institutions of all kinds were being planted on the North American landscape, but two are of special interest for us: denominations and colleges. The histories of the two are closely associated, for the religious leaders who created new denominations—including the congregations, Sunday schools, publishing enterprises, Bible societies, missionary agencies, and youth endeavors—also created many colleges, including a number that were from the beginning or eventually became public universities.

In the context of the histories of denominations and colleges and universities in North America, seminaries are a relatively recent arrival. They are in many cases by-products of—and in some respects crosses between—the other two. Andover was created in 1808 and Princeton Seminary in 1812. These schools were created in large part out of dissatisfaction among denominational leaders with the theological educations that were being provided in the colleges. Discord in the denominations was the principal motivating factor in the establishment of most of the seminaries that are now members of the ATS—and many others still emerging as well. Some of that discord has been theological/doctrinal in nature. This often caused schisms—and hence two schools where there was one. Regional differences—and especially the dispute over slavery—was at the genesis of many others. Each denomination, and then, it would seem, each group in each region of each denomination, wanted a seminary of its own.

Many of the schools founded in the 19th century have now closed. A number have merged with others. But still, almost all our seminaries have come from denominations and the ambivalent relation these denominations had with the other major form of higher education—the college and university. I say ambivalent because, while seminaries were often to be theological and spiritual antidotes to what had gotten out of hand intellectually in the colleges, they nonetheless took the institutional form of the small college—with the resident faculty who had

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specializations in teaching and research, courses of study, degrees and uniform requirements for receiving them, and so on.

Denominations and colleges—and a complex interaction among them—are where seminaries have come from; and the continuing histories of these two institutions still shape the character of—and internal and external demands on—theological seminaries in profound ways. In our time, however, denominations and colleges have become increasingly distant if not alienated from one another. Certainly in the larger social milieu they are regarded differently. If Lilly Endowment-sponsored studies of mainstream Protestantism provide any clue, mainstream Protestantism has lost a good deal of its cultural hegemony along with its membership. Many church-related colleges, sensing this, have struck out on their own in complete divorce from their founding religious bodies.

This situation creates enormous tensions for seminaries. Our society has created an expansive and highly acclaimed and valued system of higher education—public and private. Whatever the dangers and losses, denominationally-related colleges and universities seem to have no trouble loosening their moorings from their founding religious bodies in order to belong more completely to the world of higher education and the broad public that will buy its services and provide for its continued existence.

But to whom do...and can...and should...seminaries belong? Denominational seminaries in many cases no longer seem—either to themselves or to others—quite as denominational as they once did. The new student bodies and the new faculties in many Protestant schools are so mixed that it is often hard to tell the difference between the Presbyterian schools and the Methodist schools—and even between them and the Episcopal schools. Financially, most denominations can do little to encourage denominational identity and primary allegiance. And culturally it is difficult, too, for denominations do not seem all that denominational anymore.

The story is in many ways different for Catholic schools, for all kinds of historical, sociological and ecclesiastical reasons. But if Katarina Schuth's important book, Reason for the Hope, provides the insight into the future of Roman Catholic theologates that I think it does, those schools are already set on a course quite different from the one anticipated in the draft of The Program of Priestly Formation sent out recently from the offices of the National Conference of Bishops. The answer to the question, "To whom do Catholic theologates belong?", is probably a bit more clear than it is for mainstream Protestants, but the tensions are nonetheless sharp.

Many evangelical schools are related to denominations, but many are not. Some evangelical schools are the later creations of disputes analogous to those that created many mainline schools. And some are offspring of evangelical movements

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that have resisted denominationalism. In the latter, we may be seeing rather vividly both some of the possibilities and some of the strenuous difficulties that go with standing more free of denominations.

My point here is to say that the future of theological schools cannot be anticipated apart from an understanding of what is going on in the larger church bodies from which they originally sprang and/or to which they are in diverse but significantly changing ways related.

Theological schools have come largely from a second wave of educational institution building that took place at the intersection between denominationalism and higher education in the form of colleges and universities. Whether seminaries will continue in the future to be closely related to denominations; will move off on their own much as colleges seem to have, striving to create publics of their own; or will follow some other course, is one of the major questions facing us in the decades ahead. And here much depends on what happens to denominations themselves and to the changing nature of higher education in our countries.

Much also depends, however, on what larger whole we think seminaries are a part of. Surely seminaries remain a part of the world of North American denominationalism. And surely they are a part of the world of North American higher education. But I believe these contexts do not provide us with a vision of a large enough whole to give us a place to stand that will help us anticipate a valuable future.

The larger whole in which we should locate theological schools today is neither the world of denominations or the world of higher education, even though both must be taken very seriously. The larger whole of which we are and may be more vitally a part is what we might call “the practice of Christian theological education.” Throughout the history of Christianity, the practice of Christian theological education has gone on. In every era, this broad practice has had three fundamental parts: (1) conducting the academic study of theology, (2) educating the church and the public in Christian faith and practice, and (3) preparing ministers for church leadership.³

There are differences between these three, though they are deeply interdependent. Conducting academic study of theology is the most specialized of these three dimensions. As Glenn Miller and Robert Lynn have described it,

Academic theology is the application of a specific scholarly method—whether literary, historical, or philosophical—to the Scriptures, teachings, or traditions of Christian faith. It is a technical skill that requires considerable resources, including scholars who devote most of their time to study, provisions for publication, and large libraries.⁴

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Educating the church and the public in Christian faith and practice is the broadest and least specialized. It has involved a wide variety of means, skills, and forms, including not only sermons and catechetical lectures but also poetry and hymnody, tracts and devotional writings, biography, disputation in theological and church conflict, art, film, and other mass media. Fully as theological as academic theology, such theological education nonetheless varies considerably in method and requires multiple and diverse resources depending upon specific publics, the skills of educators, and the larger cultural situation.

Preparation of clergy for church leadership has also varied considerably throughout history—and still does today—”according to the church’s expectation of a minister, the specific nature of a given minister’s duties, the class structure of church and society, and whether the minister is seen primarily as a priest, shepherd of souls, or preacher.”⁵ The requirements for a priest in the Middle Ages, a Reformed pastor in 19th century New England, and the original Methodist circuit-riders were all quite different. Some included the expectation of a rather full grounding in academic theology; others neither expected nor really wanted any of that. I would also suspect there is currently more diversity in need, expectation, and practice than our current patterns of accreditation and the relative homogenization of our schools can admit.

Across centuries and cultures, a wide variety of institutions have sprung up to be the bearers of the three essential practices of theological education. Congregations have been centers not only for the theological education of church and public, but also for the preparation of ministers. Universities have sometimes been both centers for the theological education of church and public and for academic theology, while not undertaking the preparation of ministers. Some seminaries have been engaged largely in the preparation of clergy without taking on the task of doing academic theology, while others have stressed the latter while minimizing the former. In addition, institutes, centers, informal meetings, and other institutional configurations continually rise up—to take on one or more of these practices in a particular society at a particular time—and then often fade away.

What is important to notice in all this is that it is the *practices* that are perennial. They are institutionalized in different ways in different times and places—and the particular institutionalizations may come and go, or be transformed by taking on new practices. But whatever happens with particular institutions, the practices seem to endure—because they are essential to the very existence of Christian faith!

This last point leads me to the statement of some convictions—the final element necessary for having a place to stand. I will state three of them.

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The first conviction is related to the conclusion I just came to: the larger whole of the practice of Christian theological education is the practice of Christian faith itself, and that practice finds its context in the practice of God. This, clearly, is a theological conviction. There is a God, known in Christ, who is active in the world and in whose practice we can participate. The practice of theological education—in all three of its dimensions—is, when ordered to the practice of God in the world, itself participation in God’s activity. This conviction requires a large unpacking—and now is not the time for that—but for me it is the ground for freedom for the future and my own deep sense of hope for theological education and theological schools.

My second conviction is more a kind of observation about our cultural situation in North America. I sense a profound, though largely unarticulated, hunger for theological education.

In an article I recently published, entitled “Thinking Faith: A Theological Education for the American Churches,” I argued that “there is in the Christian churches and in the nation itself a profound hunger for theological education.” By that I mean that “people are asking questions about God; and they yearn for coherent, thoughtful guidance as well as fresh access to the deep veins of wisdom that at least some of them suspect are still there to be mined from historical religious traditions.” “The times are ripe,” I said then and reassert now, “for a fresh pursuit of faith—though only for a thinking faith: a faith worth thinking about, a faith to think with.”⁶

The evidence I cited was not systematic; only anecdotal. It came from places like a cover article in *The Atlantic Monthly* asking “Can We Be Good Without God?”, from some television shows and movies I’ve been watching, from some opinion pieces in the *New York Times* and *The New Republic*, from questions people are asking about what has really happened in Eastern Europe and how that is possible. These are only hints, of course, but I do sense a rather widespread feeling on many people’s part that the language, assumptions, and convictions of a radically secular culture are simply not rich enough to sustain the sort of life people feel in their bones it is in them to live. Still hoping that religious traditions have within them wisdom worth mining, many of the most discerning members of our society are asking for help from those who are theologically conversant.

What I think many in our society, in the church, even in the university, and certainly in the seminaries now hunger for is what Edward Farley once called “the wisdom proper to the life of the believer.”⁷ They yearn for a first-hand encounter with the resources the church has accumulated to enable the pursuit of such wisdom, namely, the language of the faith, its tradition—the events, imagery, and history through which the grace and presence of God have been and continue to be experienced.

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They do not want this in summarized or diluted form. They do not want it second-, third-, fourth-, or fifth-hand. They want it as directly as possible. And they want to know it, handle it, interpret it themselves. They want to feel it work in them—as a light to truth and as a way to be oriented to what is real and actual both in the large universe and in their own daily lives.

Theological education means participation in an inquiry into the truth and substance of all things in the context of the present reality of God. Theological education means direct engagement with the resources needed for a thinking faith.

We live in a world of enormous complexity, one that requires each of us to think through almost every aspect of our lives. Every study of what is required of the contemporary work-force in the United States points to the need for people who can think through what they are doing. They must be able to assess, analyze, shift perspectives, make discerning judgments, come to thoughtful decisions, and take initiative *themselves*—otherwise, they simply will not be able to do many of the jobs our society now makes available and requires for our common future.

Everyone knows that moral and political issues, however much we may wish it were otherwise, demand enormous reflective resources from all of us. The landscape is simply so pluralistic, and so speedily shifting, that each of us—not just a few of us—is daily faced with the requirement that we *think* about how to respond to the moral and political demands of our time and situation.

So, too, must each of us think about ultimate things; and we must think through penultimate things in the context of ultimacy. We live in a mass media, consumeristic culture which simultaneously gives us too much information, more choice than we know what to do with, and little help in sorting it all out. Under such conditions, we are compelled to take hold ourselves and discriminate between what has meaning that lasts and what makes sense only in the context of an artificial moment. The times we live in require a thinking faith—or no faith at all! If Christian faith in our times is not a thinking faith, it will not be *Christian* faith at all. It will be something else—something so flat and barren as to be the spiritual equivalent of despair; or something so external as to have no substantive effect on any dimension of our lives that does require thought.

When I use the term “thinking faith,” I want to signal the importance I give to faith understood as a body of thought. “The wisdom proper to the life of the believer” has, over the centuries, created a body of thought of immense richness, subtlety, and grace—a body of thought of enormous power to inspire and shape the human heart and will, and of such beauty as to captivate and compel the mind. Thinking faith requires thinking on these things.

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But thinking faith is not only a faith to think about; it is faith to think with. Thinking faith is an activity, and theology is not just its substance but also—as Paul Holmer has suggested—its grammar.⁸ Thinking faith is “the grammar of the heart,” the way the heart reasons about everything.

Thinking faith is what all Christians in our culture require. Thinking faith is the wisdom many believers—and even non-believers—know they desire.

The hunger for a theological education that I have been describing is, I believe, a response to a fundamental human need—and it points therefore to the persistence of Christian theological education in the world. It also points to the need our society has for the theological schools that now exist—and hence my third conviction: the theological schools of the ATS are vital institutions for the theological education in all three of its dimensions, academic theology, the theological education of both the churches and the larger public, and ministerial preparation.

Part of the reason that hunger for theological education is so inarticulate in our society is that there are too few institutions now existing that are dedicated to the practice of Christian theological education. Seminaries are fairly small and relatively well-hidden on the social landscape. Most church members don't know they exist—or at least which particular ones exist—and they know little about what goes on in them. Beyond the seminaries, the institutions that visibly and centrally strive to provide theological education in any of its aspects for the long haul are not obvious.

For the perpetuation, enhancement, and enlargement of the practice of Christian theological education in our society, then, seminaries are essential. Seminaries cannot, of course, take on the whole responsibility of the theological education of church and the public itself—nor for that matter can they by themselves take on the other two dimensions of theological education. But, in my view at least, the preparation of clergy that goes on in theological schools would be both more powerful and empowering were it to take more seriously the hunger and need for a theological education of the church and the public. Similarly, academic theology is essential for the kind of theological education of the church and the public our societies require. But that work, as many theologians are discovering, is enlarged and deepened as its practice is placed in the larger context of the actual public practice of faith. Again, the seminary remains the institution where that task is most readily and purposefully undertaken.

The future of the seminaries, then, is related to the denominations from which they have come and to the history of colleges and universities in response to

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which they have grown and developed. But even more significantly in the years ahead, their future will depend upon the ways in which the perennial and needful practices of Christian theological education take place in them and continue to be borne by them.

I believe we do not yet know what the practice of Christian theological education in its fullness can and might be as we move toward the next century.

The new context for theological education is already upon us. The new diversity is already enough present within theological schools to give us a taste for what the next generation's conflicts and possibilities are likely to be. And the deep hunger for truly theological vision is evident. As Peter Drucker once said, "The 'next century' is already here, indeed we are all well advanced into it. We do not know the answers, but we do know the issues."⁹ The forces working on us and in us will make us change. The question is what—in our freedom—we will discern and do with them.

My hope is that in the years ahead, theological seminaries will take the lead in envisioning and motivating a theological education in which the three strands are not left separate but in various ways interact to generate a creative synergy. If this happens, the next decades could be most exciting and promising—and the changes we will inevitably go through may be ones we do not merely suffer but instead in part create.

In all that I have said, I have said nothing about "development"—at least not directly. But I have, I hope, outlined some issues and perspectives that may be helpful to you as you make the "case" for theological education and your particular seminary.

The elements of the case, I have been suggesting, include the idea of theological education as a fundamental human need. Theological education in its full sense is not just for some but for all—and the kind that is just for some (the education of clergy) is for the sake of the theological education of all.

The case then is directed to the human public; not just the denominational public, or even just the church public or the higher education public—but everywhere and among everyone who can see reason for a thinking faith in our time.

Finally it suggests a case to live up to, one that requires of us considerable imagination and occasional courage as well as partnership with the wisest souls we can find in the churches and the broader public.

ENDNOTES

¹.Donald W. Shriver, "Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York: 1960-1990: A Financial Retrospective" (New York: Union Theological Seminary, 1989), p. 12, quoted in Robert Wood Lynn, "Coming Over the Horizon," in Barbara E. Taylor and Malcolm L. Warford, eds., *Good Stewardship* (Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1991), p. 60.

². Lynn, *Good Stewardship*, p. 59.

³.My list is a modification of one given by Glenn Miller and Robert Lynn, "Christian Theological Education," in *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience*, vol. III, Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams, eds. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), p. 1627.

⁴.Ibid.

⁵.Ibid.

⁶."Thinking Faith: A Theological Education for the American Churches," *Living Light* 27 (Fall 1990), p. 7 ff.

⁷.Edward Farley, *The Fragility of Knowledge* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), p. 88.

⁸.Paul Holmer, "The Grammar of Faith," in Richard H. Bell, ed., *The Grammar of the Heart* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), ch. 1.

⁹.Quoted in Lynn, *Good Stewardship*, p. 51.

