
Theological Education

L E A D E R S H I P

The Study of the Seminary Presidency
in Protestant Theological Seminaries

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Erskine Clarke

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Introduction

A man who has been involved as a trustee of theological institutions for more than two decades read a few pages that I wrote on the history of the presidency of seminaries. He was surprised by many things, including the fact that the presidency as we know it is a rather recent phenomenon. The fact that this well-informed trustee knew so little about the office is illustrative of the paucity of material on the subject. While there are many books and articles dealing with the presidency of colleges and universities, there are very few about the office in theological institutions.

For this reason, among others, the Lilly Endowment in 1992 funded a three-year study of the seminary presidency. Several historical studies were commissioned as a part of the project. Virginia Geddes, an oral historian, conducted a series of interviews with retired presidents from a variety of traditions and periods. These interviews have been transcribed and are available for further research in the libraries of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, and Union Theological Seminary in New York. As director of the project, these interviews helped shape my understanding of the office.

Two Catholic scholars, Joseph White and Robert Wister, were asked to study the development of the rector's office in Catholic institutions in the United States. This study is now available in an earlier supplement of this series. Shortly there will be yet another supplement; this one will contain the memoirs of current presidents and rectors with an introductory essay by Malcolm Warford. Warford bases his writing on some 25 memoirs written for this project.

It is gratifying to be able to make available in this volume the research of Professor Erskine Clarke of Columbia Theological Seminary on the history of the presidency in freestanding Protestant seminaries in the United States. Clarke has selected certain perspectives from which to view the office; using specific examples from the past, he is able to cast a great deal of light on the nature and shape of the office as it has evolved over the years.

Clarke believes the office has been shaped by the complex interaction of the particular religious tradition; the ethos of the school; the personality, style, and vision of individual presidents; and the socio-cultural contexts in specific historical periods. His approach provides a stimulating study.

If the history of an institution lives on in the current expression of the school, then it is incumbent upon its president, dean, and trustees to understand that history. Clarke is helpful in showing us how to interpret our past so that we can see more clearly in our own time.

Introduction

While the project on the seminary presidency was not limited to historical studies, these do constitute a major portion of the research. A volume on the search process for seminary presidents by Mark Holman was a part of the project as will be the forthcoming publication of an interpretation of the office by the director of the project. Together these studies provide interested persons with materials about the office that have heretofore not been available.

The members of the theological community are indebted to Craig Dykstra and Fred Hofheinz for the cooperation and support of the Lilly Endowment. Some day, no doubt, a history of that institution's contribution to the shape and well-being of the theological enterprise in North America will need to be written.

Our thanks also go to James L. Waits and Nancy Merrill of the ATS for their support and careful work in preparing these materials for publication.

Neely Dixon McCarter
President Emeritus
Pacific School of Religion

Preface

This history is part of a project to study the office of president in the theological seminaries of the United States. Funded by the Lilly Endowment and directed by Neely Dixon McCarter, the project “is designed to explore one aspect of the governance of theological institutions, the health of which are important to the churches and society.”¹ A rapid turnover in the presidency of seminaries in the late 20th century—said to threaten the stability of seminaries’ “leadership and institutional life”—prompted the project, which is designed to help a variety of audiences understand more adequately the “nature of the office that is now under such pressure.” The project includes a historical component as well as studies that focus more sharply on the period 1970-90.²

This present study is a history of the office of president in Protestant theological seminaries in the United States, both denominational and interdenominational, including those, such as Union in New York, closely related to a college or university. (It does not investigate Catholic seminaries or university divinity schools, both of which have their own distinct histories and dynamics and are the subjects of other studies.)³ By drawing on institutional histories, on biographies and autobiographies, and on a substantial body of studies on theological education, this history seeks to describe the development of the office of president in the Protestant seminaries and to analyze the changes and continuities that have marked the office.

The question that informs the research, organization, and writing of this history is: “How has the office of president been shaped by the complex interaction between (1) a distinct religious tradition; (2) the ethos of specific schools; (3) the personality, style, and vision of individual presidents; and (4) the sociocultural contexts in specific historical periods?” A fundamental thesis of this study is that the office of president has developed out of the dynamic and complex interaction of at least these four elements. The office of president itself both reflects and—to some extent—helps to shape this interaction.

Protestant theological seminaries in the United States stand largely within distinct religious traditions. These traditions provide both conceptual frameworks for understanding the nature and purpose of theological education and politics that influence the governance of theological seminaries. Moreover, these traditions are embodied by communities of faith marked by extensive networks of personal and institutional relationships. Theological seminaries—including independent and non-denominational seminaries—are institutions of these com-

munities of faith and are designed to transmit their distinct traditions and to help preserve and nurture their specific communities. The office of president as it functions in a particular seminary is influenced by the religious tradition of that seminary. For example, while many similarities exist between the work and responsibilities of a Methodist seminary president and the president of an independent Baptist seminary, their different traditions do help to give a distinct character to each of their offices. One thinks here especially of the influence of differing polities, but theological differences (for example, is the emphasis of the tradition on correct belief or personal experience?) can significantly affect the character of the office.⁴

A seminary not only stands within a broad religious tradition, it also has its own tradition, its own history and ethos. The ethos of a seminary, often shaped over many years, is its mood and character, its moral and aesthetic spirit, its underlying attitude toward itself and its world.⁵ A new president of an established seminary arrives at an institution that already has certain notions and attitudes toward the office of president. The memories and expectations that greet a new president—perhaps especially the lingering style of preceding presidents—and the mood and patterns of relating within an institution inevitably influence the character of the office the new president assumes. Some presidents have been primary shapers of an ethos and have been regarded as embodiments of an institutional character. Others have found themselves working against a dominant ethos. Many presidents, in one way or another, have found that the nature of their office has been significantly shaped by their institution's memory and mood.⁶

The personal styles and visions of presidents influence their different responses to the shaping power of tradition and ethos. Institutional histories often describe varying presidential styles, suggesting ways that the personality structure and character of individual presidents provide a distinct tone and focus to the office. A president who is "cool and aloof" not only performs certain presidential duties in a different manner from one who is "warm and outgoing" but also often focuses on different functions of the office. One who is described as "paternalistic and perfectionistic" organizes an administration in ways that are different from one who is "collegial." In a similar manner, a president's vision of theological education's purpose and character provides a certain shape and focus to the office during that president's tenure. A president who believes that a seminary should be "a center of sound learning, refined culture and evangelical faith" makes of the office something different from one who believes that a seminary "ought to crave for itself a due share in shaping the new order of things."⁷

The varying visions of presidents do not, of course, appear out of the blue but reflect the presidents' geographic, social, and theological locations. Moreover, the office of president has been largely shaped by powerful contextual forces. The origin of the office itself was intimately related to changes in North American society, particularly the rise of bureaucratic systems and of the manager. "Management theory," for example, largely drawn from the world of business with its values and presuppositions, has had a significant impact on the office of president. The nature and character of the office, in other words, are not autonomous, but emerge out of a particular social reality. The office reflects its historical setting.

In order to explore the dynamic and complex interaction of these four elements in the shaping of the office, this study is organized primarily in a thematic, rather than a chronological, fashion. An introductory chapter provides a brief overview of Protestant theological education in the 19th century. Special attention is given in this chapter to the emergence of the office of president at the end of the 19th century and to the question: "Why did the office emerge in this period as such a powerful and influential position in U.S. Protestantism?" The following chapters are designed around the character or functions of the office and have a chronological element embedded in them. This approach, it is hoped, will allow readers to dip into the study at points of special interest. A final chapter identifies a conclusion of the study—that the office, for all its strength, has lacked a coherent and compelling theological interpretation—and suggests a new metaphor for interpreting and guiding the actual work of the office in the future: the president as a practical theologian.

The study has been researched, organized, and written with certain audiences in mind. Presidents of seminaries—perhaps especially new presidents—search committees for new presidents, theological faculties, and boards of trustees are regarded as primary audiences. It is hoped, however, that the study also will be a resource for those in scholarly communities who have an interest in the history of theological education, or more generally higher education, in the United States.

Many persons have been helpful in the preparation of this study. Neely McCarter not only conceived of the larger project on the seminary presidency but also carefully read each chapter of this manuscript. He brought to that task his own experience as a seminary president and his extensive study of higher education in the United States. His perspectives, questions, and encouragement were a great help. Others who read the manuscript and provided useful comments were Robert Wood Lynn, Walter Brueggemann, James Hudnut-Beumler, Catherine Gonzalez,

Douglas W. Oldenburg, and George W. Stroup. Nancy Elizabeth Graham was not simply a helpful student assistant with this project but a genuine colleague. She gathered and read obscure histories, compiled statistics, checked endnotes, and wrote illuminating comments. Members of the Columbia Theological Seminary library staff, especially Christine Wenderoth, Elizabeth Morgan, Colleen Higgs, and Clay Hulet, were most cooperative in securing the many interlibrary-loan books needed for this study. Seminary librarians across the country responded to inquiries, gathered statistical data, and frequently copied excerpts of institutional histories. For their help with this project, I am most grateful. Beverly Denbow of Okemos, Michigan, did her work as copy editor with great care and precision.

Erskine Clarke
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ENDNOTES

1. Neely Dixon McCarter, "Proposal for the Study of the Seminary Presidency," March 2, 1992, 4, Graduate Theological Union Library, Berkeley, California.
2. *Ibid.*, 4-10.
3. See papers, interviews, and articles in collection "Lilly Study of the Seminary Presidency," Graduate Theological Union Library.
4. For the ways in which religious traditions influence the character of theological seminaries, see Robert G. Torbet, "Baptist Theological Education: An Historical Survey," *Foundations* 6 (1963): 311-35 and Jerald C. Brauer, "Lutheranism in American Theological Education," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 36 (1965): 373-84.
5. For "ethos," see Clifford Geertz, "Ethos, World View, and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).
6. Walter Brueggemann, for example, has given special attention to the role of ethos in his study of Eden Theological Seminary. See Walter Brueggemann, *Ethos & Ecumenism, An Evangelical Blend: A History of Eden Theological Seminary, 1925-1975* (Saint Louis: Eden Publishing House, 1975).
7. For the relationship between "vision" and social context, see Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, ed. George H. Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

The Office of President

Introduction

Speaking before the Conference of Congregational Seminaries meeting in Saint Louis in 1900, John Knox McLean addressed the question: "Should the theological seminary have a permanent president; and if so, what should be the powers and duties of the office?" McLean, the influential new president of the Pacific School of Religion, began his remarks by noting that the "question of a permanent presidency for theological seminaries is of recent origin." Whatever had been attempted in that direction, he said, had been, "with little exception, more in name than in reality." A few seminaries had established an office of president—"in the proper sense of the term"—but most had none. And among those seminaries that had a president, "the actual position of the person bearing it has usually been, by selection of his faculty, chairman of that body; but with no substantial increase of powers or duties toward the institution as such." In these cases, McLean noted, presidents "hold their positions without permanency, without appointment by the institution's governing body, and without any general administrative function." The office of president "is little more than a faculty distinction; which in instances is passed in rotation throughout the faculty membership."¹

Less than 20 years after McLean's address, the office of president—"in the proper sense of the term"—was widely established among the Protestant theological seminaries of the United States. Moreover, the holders of the office were among the most influential and powerful leaders within U.S. Protestantism. The purpose of this chapter is to explore this important shift within Protestant theological seminaries, the character of the new office, and the reasons it emerged as such an influential position within U.S. Protestantism.

Theological Education in the 19th Century

When McLean spoke in Saint Louis in 1900, Protestant seminaries in the United States were less than a hundred years old. The founding in 1808 of Andover Seminary had signaled a new style of theological education and the beginning of Protestant seminaries as separate institutions of advanced professional education.² Previously, formal theological education had taken place largely in colonial colleges or European universities and had often been supplemented by courses of

directed reading under the supervision of an older pastor in “household schools.” Late 18th-century efforts that carried within them germs of later institutional developments were “more officially sanctioned programs of private instruction than they were true seminaries.”³ With the founding of Andover, however, the way was open for the rapid establishment of theological seminaries as graduate professional schools. Thirty years after Andover’s establishment by orthodox Congregationalists in Massachusetts, 32 Protestant theological seminaries were scattered across the country.⁴ By the time McLean spoke in Saint Louis, there were 119 theological seminaries representing significant denominational and geographic diversity.⁵ Fueling this expansion and shaping much of the character of the seminaries were broad movements in the churches and in American culture.

The Second Great Awakening that swept over the land at the beginning of the 19th century not only warmed individual hearts with its revival fires but also spawned a rapidly increasing number of churches, religious groups, and benevolent societies.⁶ The demand for ministers was intensified, especially to meet the challenge of an expanding frontier and the rising call of foreign missions.⁷ Earlier patterns of ministerial training appeared to some to be woefully inadequate in the face of such challenges. The “household schools” in which ministerial candidates apprenticed were, it was said, unable to produce the numbers needed or to meet expectations of a professional ministry.⁸ At the same time, an increasing secularization of collegiate education began to turn many colleges away from an older classics curriculum—which had been largely designed for the education of ministers—toward a new emphasis on the sciences and legal subjects. Church leaders, left uneasy by such shifts, began to search for alternatives.⁹ The theological seminary emerged out of this context as an institution of the churches for the professional training of ministers. Moreover, the establishment of theological seminaries was seen to be a means of nurturing and transmitting particular theological traditions, of responding to theological controversies, and of advancing sectional and ideological interests.¹⁰

The institutional character of the seminaries was set from the first by the pattern of Andover—a graduate professional institution with a full-time faculty, capital funds and a campus, a library, a resident student body, a three-year curriculum, and a board of trustees.¹¹ The requirement of a Bachelor of Arts degree, although not always maintained, was intended to ensure that theological students had both the philosophical and linguistic background provided by a collegiate education and the general culture and manners taught in the colleges.¹² The faculties were increasingly specialized in distinct theological disciplines and

were expected to transmit the results of their studies to their students.¹³ Adequate funds were needed in order to allow students to attend without paying tuition (a practice that would last in some seminaries until deep into the 20th century and that would be revived in others at the end of the 20th century in patterns of financial aid.)¹⁴ These institutional arrangements would provide a context, it was expected, to nurture both the piety and the intellect of the students.¹⁵

For many of the founders of seminaries, influenced by optimistic eschatological expectations, these new institutions seemed powerful engines for the building of the Kingdom of God in America.¹⁶ By providing a growing army of professional ministers, the seminaries were to help shape the young republic into a Christian (and civilized) America. Such an organizing vision would play an important role in the seminaries' relationship to U.S. culture. Conceived as a servant of such a vision, a seminary's prosperity would often be intimately related to its ideological support for denominational and regional variations of this vision of a Christian America.

Not all denominations, however, welcomed the arrival of theological seminaries. The Second Great Awakening had a powerful egalitarian thrust, releasing a democratic spirit that, in the words of Nathan Hatch, invited "even the most unlearned and inexperienced to respond to a call to preach."¹⁷ Early Methodists were only the most prominent of a host of opponents to "priest factories."¹⁸ For the Methodists, a seminary education threatened to "dry up the sparks of the Holy Spirit"¹⁹ and separate the clergy from the laity in an elitist fashion. An important—and perhaps ironic—consequence of this fear was that the Methodists would become "the leading sponsors of university-related divinity schools" where secular and religious leaders would be educated in a single institution.²⁰

Such opposition revealed from the beginning important tensions and competing impulses lodged within theological seminaries. On the one hand, seminaries would serve ideological purposes as they sought to nurture a disciplined elite careful to guard entrance into their membership. Theological seminaries would be one way to keep at bay "religious insurgents," to transmit particular theological traditions, to preserve the social identity of the clergy, and to justify present systems of authority in the churches and in U.S. society. In this manner, theological seminaries were intended from the first to serve an ideological function—to support a tradition, its authority, and those in authority. In this supportive role they shared a similar ideological function with other institutions of higher education.²¹

On the other hand, theological seminaries would on occasion serve a subversive role, undermining a tradition, its authority, and those in authority. Within many denominations, seminaries would be seen as dangerous places where unorthodox thought lurked and where the sparks of the Spirit were turned to ashes and dust. Such places, it would be said, were threats not only to the religious communities that supported them but also to the religious foundations of American society. The tensions between the ideological functions of the seminaries and their potential as subversive agents would mark theological seminaries from their inception at the beginning of the 19th century.²² These same tensions would be no small factor in shaping the office of president when it emerged “full-blown” at the end of the century.

Despite the early opposition to them, theological seminaries were supported by every major Protestant denomination in the United States by the time McLean spoke in Saint Louis. A partial list—selected to illustrate the denominational and geographical spread—suggests the extent to which the institution had become firmly established in Protestant America. (See Table 1.1.)

The Office of President: “More in Name Than Reality”

Until the closing years of the 19th century, the management of Protestant seminaries in the United States was largely in faculty hands. Glenn Miller has summarized the role of 19th-century theological faculties:

Responsibility for the schools devolved on their faculties. Without explicit authorization either in their charter or from their Boards, teachers assumed the roles that earlier belonged to the “Fellows” of English colleges. They conducted the everyday administration of the schools, recruited students, planned curricula, and, for all practical purposes, selected new faculty members.²³

Boards of trustees or of directors, whose primary responsibilities were to ensure that the seminaries remained faithful to their stated purposes and confessional statements, were generally satisfied for faculties to manage the routine affairs of the schools.²⁴ Typically, a board was more deeply involved in the governance of a seminary when an institution was first established and during periods of turmoil. Not unlike their 20th-century successors, board members were often involved in raising funds and mediating between a constituency and the school.²⁵

TABLE 1.1

**SELECTED LIST ILLUSTRATING DENOMINATIONAL
AND GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE OF
19TH-CENTURY PROTESTANT SEMINARIES**

<u>Seminary</u>	<u>Year Founded</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Denomination</u>
Andover	1808	Massachusetts	Congregational
Princeton	1812	New Jersey	Presbyterian
General	1817	New York	Episcopal
Union	1823	Virginia	Presbyterian
Mercersberg	1825	Pennsylvania	German Reformed
Gettysburg	1826	Pennsylvania	Lutheran
Newton	1826	Massachusetts	Baptist
Columbia	1828	South Carolina	Presbyterian
Kenyon	1828	Ohio	Episcopal
Southern Lutheran	1830	South Carolina	Lutheran
Hartford	1833	Connecticut	Congregational
Lane	1839	Ohio	Presbyterian
Concordia	1839	Missouri	Lutheran
Eden	1850	Missouri	Evan. Reformed
Garrett	1853	Illinois	Methodist
Chicago	1854	Illinois	Congregational
Wartburg	1854	Iowa	Lutheran
Lexington	1865	Kentucky	Disciplines
Western	1866	Michigan	Reformed Ch. Am.
Pacific School of Rel.	1866	California	Congregational
San Francisco	1871	California	Presbyterian
Luther	1876	Minnesota	Lutheran
Calvin	1876	Michigan	Chr. Reformed
Westminster (Wesley)	1881	Maryland	Methodist
Iliff	1892	Colorado	Methodist

Within this context, some seminaries had faculty members who were also designated president. They were responsible for presiding at faculty meetings and often for student discipline, but, as McLean noted, they were president “more in name than in reality.”²⁶ The president as an executive with the authority and power to manage the day-to-day affairs of the institution developed in the seminaries only during the closing years of the 19th century when a changing social and cultural context began to encourage a new emphasis on “planning and control.” Two examples illustrate the nature and character of the seminary presidency during most of the 19th century.

When Union Seminary was organized in New York in 1836, Thomas McAuley was elected president of the board of directors, president of the seminary, and professor of pastoral theology and church government. Because the board was actively involved in the establishment of the seminary and the conduct of its business during its first few years, McAuley’s responsibilities as president of the board were evidently much greater than the less clearly defined duties of seminary president. When he resigned from both presidencies in 1840, he was followed by Joel Parker who was elected president and professor of sacred rhetoric. When Parker resigned in fewer than two years, no seminary president was appointed for 31 years. In 1873, William Adams, one of the original founders of the seminary, was elected president and professor of sacred rhetoric. Adams’s most notable activity as president was securing from wealthy friends sizable contributions to Union. Since Adams, wrote Robert Handy, “Union without a president has simply been inconceivable.” When Adams died in 1880, Roswell Hitchcock was elected president but continued as professor of church history. Hitchcock and those who followed him gradually assumed increasing executive authority to meet the demands of the “new day.”²⁷

When Garrett Theological Seminary was organized in Evanston, Illinois, in 1853, John Dempster was elected its first president and professor of polemical and didactic theology. “Whether he became president of the school or president of the faculty,” wrote the institution’s historian, “is debatable.” When Dempster resigned in 1859, Matthew Simpson, a Methodist bishop, was elected president. Simpson did not live in Evanston and his episcopal functions continued to occupy most of his time. In 1867 the faculty noted in its minutes: “The duties of the President are to a considerable degree nominal as this office is held by one of the Bishops of the Church.”²⁸ Simpson was followed in 1872 by William Ninde, who as professor of pastoral theology and church history evidently functioned simply as the presiding officer of the faculty. When he was elected bishop in 1884, he was followed by the professor of historical theology, Henry B. Ridgeway, who was

chosen to be “chairman of the board of teachers and [to] attend to the general duties of the presidency.” It was only with the election of Charles J. Little as president in 1895 that the office began to take on the functions and power of a modern executive.²⁹

The Office of President: “In the Proper Sense of the Term”

The office of seminary president, in what McLean called “the proper sense of the term,” emerged in the midst of fundamental transformations of American society. These transformations not only provided the context for the emergence of the new office but also shaped to a considerable extent the character of the office. The immediate contexts in which Union (NY) and Garrett moved toward a modern president illustrate the transformations.

In 1850 the population of New York city was 515,547, and the little city of Chicago had 29,963.³⁰ Fifty years later, New York had a population of 3,437,202, and Chicago had grown to 1,698,575.³¹ Much of the growth of both cities had been fueled by the arrival of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe who brought with them religious beliefs and cultural traditions that were strange and threatening to the old Protestant establishment. A new urban America was replacing an older, more rural, and small-town America.³²

New York’s changing skyline told of changing values and new ways of ordering life. Before 1890, the skyline of the city had been dominated for 200 years by church spires and the masts of ships. In 1890, with the second industrial revolution and the advent of cheap structural steel and electrical elevators, the city’s first skyscraper was built. Within 10 years, the city’s horizon was dominated by skyscrapers that overshadowed the old images and revealed a new type of urban life: more massive, more secular, and more cosmopolitan, needing increasingly efficient bureaucracies to manage urban life.

In the midst of such transformations, a rising new middle class began to search for stability and equilibrium, for efficiency and order to keep at bay the disorders and threatening chaos of an urban and industrial society.³³ The social instrument that promised the greatest success in this quest was the professional manager.

The professional manager was a creature of an economic system increasingly dominated by the modern corporation.³⁴ The manager’s task was “to organize the human and non-human resources available to the organization that employs him so as to improve its position in the marketplace.”³⁵ The manager’s role was to “persuade, inspire, manipulate, cajole, and intimidate those he manages so that

his organization measures up to criteria of effectiveness shaped ultimately by the market but specifically by the expectations of those in control of his organization—finally, its owners.”³⁶ Efficiency and know-how were primary values of the manager, and standardization was a primary means of organization.

Closely linked to the rise of the manager was an emerging culture of professionalism. This culture required that amateurs trust the integrity of the trained professional. Respect for the moral authority of the professional was rooted in a certain awe the amateur was to feel in the presence of specialized knowledge obtained through extensive training and indoctrination, and it was marked by careful “gate keeping” into professional societies.³⁷

The professional manager appeared to all who wished to be “modern” the most effective means to meet the challenges of the new social and cultural context at the end of the 19th century. The character of manager consequently began to emerge not only in large corporations but also in other sectors of American society.³⁸ Protestant theological seminaries were no exception. Indeed, it would have been surprising if the professional manager had *not* appeared in Protestant seminaries with their close identification with dominant sectors of American society. In the seminaries, the manager’s task and role were assumed by the new presidents. Broadly speaking, the closer a particular seminary was identified with corporate America and the rising urban culture of the United States, the sooner it adopted the new office of president.

McLean’s call for seminary presidents “in the proper sense of the term”—reveals with unmistakable clarity the degree to which the character of the professional manager provided an image for the new office. In preparing for his address, McLean had written a number of college and university presidents asking their opinion if the seminaries needed “a permanent president,” and, if so, what should be the character of the office. In their responses, which McLean summarized and enthusiastically endorsed, the image of professional manager dominated the imagination.

“I do not see,” wrote one college president, “how any institution can be *efficiently managed* without someone who is at the head of it; responsible throughout all its departments and with sufficient power to make his ideals dominate the policy of the institution.” For this college president, it was unlikely that the seminaries could “permanently prosper until they get a *more efficient method of administration* than most of them now possess.” Without a president, “indefiniteness, friction, and chaos are almost sure to prevail.” The seminaries need “a single competent head who can originate, and execute, and hold in constant survey all

departments and all necessities."³⁹ A university president wrote that "It may not be too much to say, that the methods of a great commercial corporation in allowing its president or manager to select his associates and subordinates, should be followed by an educational corporation."⁴⁰ All the responses reflected an expectation that order, efficiency, and "concentrated effort"—that planning and control—would help to bring a sense of direction and stability to the theological institutions. These values and methods, so crucial for the rise of a modern society and so intimately associated with the professional manager, were what needed to be embodied, McLean insisted, in the new office of president.

McLean quoted with approval the recently published *College Administration* by President Charles Thwing of Western Reserve University. Thwing, in discussing the office of college president, traced its development through three successive types: "the earliest was the clerical; the second the scholastic; and the third was, and is, the executive type."⁴¹ McLean argued that the seminaries now needed the executive type—a person who "is not a teacher; he is an executive. His work is to do things, not to tell about them."⁴²

Central to the work of the president as executive was raising money.⁴³ McLean noted "the pathetic lack of financial resources" for the Protestant seminaries in the country. He quoted Thwing with approval: "As a financier, the college president is first to get funds; second, to invest funds; and third, to use funds. As he gets funds largely, invests funds safely, uses funds wisely, is his success assured." The seminaries, said McLean, needed money "for the proper doing and proper enlargement and proper enrichment of [their] work." Because of their miserable financial conditions, the seminaries' work was "not being properly done, nor properly enlarged, nor properly enriched." To change this financial picture required a "radical revolution in methods of seminary administration."⁴⁴

Such a revolution involved a new emphasis on efficient management. Seminary faculties, who had been conducting so much of the seminaries' business, were simply, by their very nature, incapable of efficient management. Each faculty member, said McLean, regards his own department as the all-important one and is "ambitious to have its paramount interests pushed at whatever cost to other interests." How is it possible, he asked, for such a body to find itself fit "for that calm, comprehensive deliberation" needed for the efficient management of a seminary?

How can a body so composed and disposed, so pressed down with other work; so engrossed in varying interest; hope to furnish that capability, delicate but robust, sagacious but genial, resolute but patient, steadfast but considerate, which is essential to the task of devising right measures and carrying them through to right issues, in an undertaking so important as the successful administration of the highest form of human education? It is not possible. To ask the question is to answer it.⁴⁵

For McLean, what was needed to run a seminary was not a faculty meeting but a president—and not just any president but one who embodied the “muscular Christianity” of late Victorians and the administrative skills of a professional manager. The picture that he painted was of a president who resembled a 19th-century Yale fullback—“delicate but robust...steadfast but considerate.”⁴⁶

A manly president, possessed of managerial skills, would be able to relate well to businessmen unwilling to listen to faculty “plodding over details” or endlessly debating an issue. If sagacious businessmen were to be persuaded to serve on seminary boards, said McLean, they would insist on an “administration lodged in intelligent and expert hands,” which meant an executive “whose affair it shall be to carry details” and “to have all subjects connected with the institution close upon his attention.” What was needed for the new day, insisted McLean, was a president who had the ability “to condense and clearly present; who can with telegraphic conciseness answer questions, state reasons, present requirements, urge necessities, and summarize results.”⁴⁷

A corporate image of society thus informed McLean’s call for seminary presidents. The new presidents were to be executives after the model of corporate America. This “corporate image of society,” Joel Spring has written in *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State*, “was shared by the emerging elite in business, labor unions, politics, and education and provided the organizing framework for dealing with the rapid industrialization and urbanization of the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century.”⁴⁸ New institutional structures and style, echoing changes remaking much of American life, would help shape Protestant seminaries into institutions designed to meet the needs and expectations of a corporate and technological world.

McLean’s call for a “radical revolution in the methods of seminary administration” was already beginning to be answered around the country. Men known for their administrative abilities, for “vigorous and enterprising management,” and for “energetic conduct of affairs”⁴⁹ were being called to a newly created, or greatly strengthened, office of president: Charles Little at Garrett in 1895; Hugh

Latimer Elderdice in 1897 at Westminster (later to be renamed Wesley); Thornton Sampson at Austin Presbyterian in 1900; Walter W. Moore at Union (VA) in 1904; and so on around the country.⁵⁰

At some schools, the office evolved under the leadership of a strong president, taking on more and more the character of a professional manager. Such was the case at Rochester under Augustus H. Strong and at General under Eugene Hoffman.⁵¹ Developments at Episcopal in Cambridge, Massachusetts, illustrate the transitions from an earlier style of administration to one more reflective of corporate America.

In 1876 George Gray was elected dean of Episcopal Theological School. (The office of dean in Episcopal schools would correspond in its history and function to president in other seminaries and consequently is included in this study.) Under Gray's leadership, the office increasingly assumed the character of a modern executive. Discipline in the school was "tightened." The "administration became brisk." For the historian of Episcopal, even Gray's writing style showed the institutional changes taking place. His predecessor had written in an elegant hand with "long eddying sentences reminiscent of the eighteenth century." These "disappeared abruptly," to be replaced by Gray's "clear, round legible hand and a style equally clear, almost crisp." With his earlier business training, Gray "maintained with the trustees an easy rapport subtly different in quality from the relationship which had prevailed between the trustees and his predecessor." The trustees "felt at home with Gray. They thought of him, obviously, as one of themselves. And Gray felt at home with them—rather more at home than he felt with the faculty, much as he liked and respected his colleagues." Gray's successors followed the direction he had set, assuming increasing administrative authority until under George Hodges—elected dean in 1894—a modern executive was clearly in the office.⁵²

The specific expectations for these newly established executives were enumerated in resolutions adopted by the conference of Congregational Seminaries following McLean's address in 1900. The conference—composed of representatives from Andover, Bangor, Chicago, Hartford, Montreal, Oberlin, Pacific, and Yale—unanimously resolved that "in the judgment of this conference every theological seminary should have a permanent president, whose powers and duties should, in a general way, correspond to those of the college president." Where a theological school was affiliated with a university, "a permanent dean should exercise, so far as the nature of the case allows, the powers and duties here suggested for a president." Those duties were specifically:

- a. The seminary president should be a member, and preferably chairman, of his board of control and *ex-officio* member of all its standing committees.
- b. While bearing no responsibility for the investment or safe-keeping of funds, he should expect to closely concern himself with the financial development of his institution, and be qualified to make intelligent recommendations as to the use of its income; which recommendations should have great weight in the financial policy of the seminary.
- c. Upon him should largely rest the responsibility and accountability for devising and successfully carrying out the general policy of the institution, including its course of study; for the creation and maintenance of its moral, spiritual, and social atmosphere; and also for representing his seminary in its relation to the other seminaries, to institutions of secular learning, before the churches and community in general.
- d. In his hands also should be the initiative in the nomination and removal of instructors.
- e. The seminary president should take part in class-room work as will bring him into vital touch with all the students; the amount of this work, however, to be always subordinate to the duties of administration.⁵³

These resolutions represented a clear articulation of a widespread agreement that had emerged by 1900 about the need for an executive officer at the head of Protestant theological seminaries in the United States. With the exception of responsibility for the “course of study”—which was in most cases left in the hands of the faculty—the office of president in 20th-century Protestant seminaries would reflect the general character and functions envisioned in the resolutions. The assumptions that informed them and the values that they advocated were unmistakably those of a newly emerged corporate America. The professional manager, a master of efficiency who knew the language and the techniques of corporate America and who could move with ease among its elite executives, was the image that dominated the new office of president. How that image and its world interacted with distinct religious traditions, particular institutional histories and ethos, and the personalities of those called to the office is central to the chapters that follow.

ENDNOTES

1. John Knox McLean, "The Presidency of Theological Seminaries: Should the Theological Seminary Have a Permanent President; And if So, What Should Be the Powers and Duties of the Office?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 50 (April 1901): 314-15, 318.
2. For the establishment of Protestant theological seminaries in the United States, see Glenn T. Miller, *Piety and Intellect: The Aims and Purposes of Ante-Bellum Theological Education* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), esp. 1-83; James W. Fraser, *Schooling the Preachers: The Development of Protestant Theological Education in the United States, 1740-1875* (New York: University Press of America, 1988), 29-47; and Frank Dixon McCloy, "The Founding of Protestant Theological Seminaries in the United States of America, 1784-1840" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1959). For the founding of Andover, see also Leonard Woods, *History of the Andover Theological Seminary* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Co., 1885), and Henry K. Rowe, *History of Andover Theological Seminary* (Newton, Ma: Thomas Todd Co., 1933). Miller, Fraser, and McCloy all contain extensive bibliographic notes for those who wish to explore further the establishment of Protestant seminaries. For the history of the study of theology, see Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), esp. part I.
3. Miller, 49.
4. For a list of Protestant theological seminaries founded in the United States between 1808 and 1839, giving dates of founding, denominations, and number of faculty and students, see Miller, 201-2.
5. See McLean, 317.
6. A vast literature exists for the Second Great Awakening and its impact on American religious life. Among the most important studies are Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); George M. Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970); John B. Boles, *The Great Revival, 1787-1805: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1972); and Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).
7. Pacific School of Religion, originally Pacific Theological Seminary, was the first graduate school of religion west of the Mississippi River when it was founded by Congregationalists in 1866. See Harland E. Hogue, *Christian Seed in Western Soil: Pacific School of Religion through a Century* (Berkeley, CA: Pacific School of Religion, 1965), 1. Twelve years earlier Congregationalists had founded Chicago Theological Seminary. They were hungry for a denominational voice in mid-America and wanting to show their system adaptable to the rough, crude, and isolated conditions of the frontier. See Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr., *No Ivory Tower: The Story of the Chicago Theological Seminary* (Chicago: The Chicago Theological Seminary, 1965), 1, 6. Geographic concerns also played a part in the founding of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Its first president, Thornton Rogers Sampson, believed the future of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., in the Southwest depended upon a native ministry, locally trained. See Thomas White Currie, *Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary; A Seventy-fifth Anniversary History* (San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 1978), 22.
8. See Miller, 53-56, and Fraser, 29-47.
9. The founding of Princeton Theological Seminary provides a good example of these developments. For changes taking place at Princeton College in the early years of the 19th century, see Thomas J. Wertenbaker, *Princeton: 1746-1896* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946). For the seminary, see Mark Noll, "The Founding of Princeton Seminary,"

Westminster Theological Journal 42 (1979): 72-110. Archibald Alexander, in urging the Presbyterian General Assembly to establish a separate seminary, argued: "It is much to be doubted whether the system of education pursued in our colleges and universities is the best adapted to prepare a young man for the work of the ministry. The great extension of the physical sciences and the taste and fashion of the age have given such a shape and direction to the academical course that I confess, it appears to me to be little adapted to introduce youth to the study of the sacred Scripture." Elwyn Allen Smith, *The Presbyterian Ministry in American Culture: A Study in Changing Concepts, 1700-1900* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 119.

10. See C. C. Goen, "Changing Conceptions of Protestant Theological Education in America," *Foundations* 6 (1963): 300; McGiffert, 12-13; and Peter Hall, *The Organization of American Culture: Private Institutions, Elites and the Origins of American Nationality*, Education and Socialization in American History Series (New York: New York University Press, 1982).

11. See Miller, 68-69; Goen, 302.

12. Many seminaries offered alternative "diploma" or "certificate" tracks for students who did not have four-year college degrees but who were interested in theological pursuits or ministry opportunities. Illinois's Augustana, a Lutheran seminary, for example, offered a shorter program for lay preachers who had taken some preparatory work either in Sweden or America—most of them older men with perhaps considerable spiritual experience but little academic training. By 1880, 20 years after its founding, the faculty had become increasingly reluctant to grant any such petitions. See C. Everett Arden, *The School of the Prophets: The Background and History of Augustana Theological Seminary 1860-1960* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1960), 195. See also McGiffert, 150; and William T. Ingram, Jr., ed., *A History of Memphis Theological Seminary*, (Memphis: Memphis Theological Seminary Press, 1990), 95.

13. In the early years of seminary education, professors often taught a variety of subjects across disciplines. At Chicago, for example, three professors alternated teaching church history and pastoral theology because the seminary could not afford a professor to teach either subject exclusively. See McGiffert, 31.

14. At Garrett, for example, no tuition was charged from its founding in 1853 until 1939. In 1912 an "incidental fee" of 26 dollars was levied on single students living in dormitories and six dollars was charged to married students living on their own. See Frederick A. Norwood, *From Dawn to Midday at Garrett* (Evanston, IL: Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 1978), 115, 138.

15. Filling the church, declared the Plan for Princeton Theological Seminary, "with a learned and able ministry without a corresponding portion of real piety, would be a curse to the world and an offense to God and his people." John A. Mackay, "Archibald Alexander," in *Sons of the Prophets: Leaders in Protestantism from Princeton Seminary*, ed. Hugh T. Kerr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 14. For the double emphasis on learning and piety, see also Robert T. Handy, *A History of Union Theological Seminary in New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), ix, 8-9; and George L. Blackman, *Faith and Freedom: A Study of Theological Education and the Episcopal Theological School* (New York: Seabury Press, 1967), 23. The concern of the seminaries to nurture both piety and learning is obviously a primary theme of Glenn T. Miller's study, *Piety and Intellect*. See also Blackman, 322; Hogue, 31; McGiffert, 228; and Powel Mills Dawley, *The Story of the General Theological Seminary: A Sesquicentennial History, 1817-1967* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 267, 299, 311.

16. See Goen, 300-301.

17. Hatch, 57.

18. For this opposition, see Hatch, 49-66, and Fraser, 79-117.
19. Norwood, 6.
20. Miller, 426.
21. Examples of this ideological function can be seen from a variety of angles. The role of seminaries in preserving ethnic identity and theological traditions, for example, was particularly clear in 19th-century German Lutheran seminaries. Huber's narrative on *Educating Lutheran Pastors in Ohio* is largely dominated by this concern, but so are other histories of German seminaries. See Donald L. Huber, *Educating Lutheran Pastors in Ohio, 1830-1980: A History of Trinity Lutheran Seminary and its Predecessors* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989). For the role of Calvin Theological Seminary in the preservation of a Dutch identity and Reformed tradition in the United States, see James D. Bratt, *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America: A History of a Conservative Subculture* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1984). For the role of Columbia Theological Seminary in defending a Southern white identity and a theological tradition supportive of white hegemony, see Erskine Clarke, "Southern Nationalism and Columbia Theological Seminary," *Journal of Presbyterian History* (Summer 1988): 123-33.
- 22 See, for example, the story of Lane and Oberlin, in Fraser, 49-71.
- 23 Miller, 35.
24. At Austin Seminary, for example, when its first president Thornton Rogers Sampson resigned in 1905, the faculty as a whole assumed the duties of administration, with one professor serving as chair of the faculty. Another president was not named until 1909 (Currie, 29). At Concordia, Saint Louis, the collective faculty was responsible for management of the seminary and the board of control was given narrow supervisory, but not policy-making, functions, which were reserved for the Missouri Synod. See Carl S. Meyer, *From Log Cabin to Luther Tower* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 34. See also Blackman, 192-93, 364-65.
25. See Handy, 1-23; Norwood, 3-43; Blackman, 72-93; and Miller, 32. The tradition of board donations clearly continued in the 20th century—sometimes helping institutions stay afloat. See Theodore G. Tappert, *History of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, 1864-1964* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1964), 89; and Harry V. Richardson, *Walk Together Children: The Story of the Birth and Growth of the Interdenominational Theological Center* (Atlanta: ITC Press, 1981), 94.
26. For the example of General Theological Seminary's "dean-for-a-year," see Blackman, 86-7, and for the Dean's role in discipline, see 224-25. Similarly, Charles F. Schaeffer, who was chair of the faculty at pre-presidential Philadelphia Seminary, presided at faculty meetings, was its spokesman in relations with students, and personally drafted the code of regulations designed to govern student life (Tappert, 45). See also John A. Broadus, *Memoir of James P. Boyce, Late President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893), 164-65.
27. Handy, 51-52.
28. Norwood, 39.
29. *Ibid.*, 14, 39, 41, 47.
30. J. D. B. DeBow, *Statistical View of the United States...Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census* (Washington, DC: A. O. P. Nicholson, 1854), 347, 372.
31. See Mark S. Hoffman, ed., *The World Almanac and Book of Facts* (New York: Pharos Books, 1991), 132.
32. A convenient and helpful place to begin exploring these transitions is Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 731-62, 842-46.

33. The now classic study of this rising middle class's quest for efficiency and order is Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).
34. For the rise of the profession and its relationship to education in the United States, see Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976).
35. Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 45.
36. Ibid.
37. For the emergence of professional societies and associations, and their "gate-keeping" functions, see Bledstein, 85-92; and Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), esp. 130-33, 281-82, 464-68. For theological education and professionalism, see Fraser, 134-37.
38. Raymond E. Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962). See esp. chapter 8, "A New Profession Takes Form," 179-220.
39. McLean, 321-22; emphasis added.
40. Ibid., 323.
41. Charles F. Thwing, *College Administration* (New York: Century Co., 1900), 49.
42. McLean, 10. See examples at General Seminary (Dawley, 270-72) and at the Interdenominational Theological Center (Richardson, 93-94).
43. See examples at Pacific School of Religion (Hogue, 79, 98-99), Augustana (Arden, 171-72, 182, 211-12, 214-15), Asbury (Percival A. Wesche, *Henry Clay Morrison: "Crusader Saint"* [Berne, IN: Herald Press, 1963], 150-51), Garrett (Norwood, 107), Austin (Currie, 16), Chicago (McGiffert, 131), and for later in the century, Interdenominational Theological Center (Richardson, 81, 84-85).
44. McLean, 318, 329-30.
45. Ibid., 323.
46. Ibid. For developments in the colleges and universities that encouraged such an understanding of the seminary presidency, see Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).
47. Ibid., 335-37
48. Joel H. Spring, *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), 1.
49. See Douglas R. Chandler, ed. C. C. Goen, *Pilgrimage of Faith: A Centennial History of Wesley Theological Seminary, 1882-1982* (Washington, DC: Seven Locks Press, 1984), 32-34.
50. Norwood, 44-86; Chandler, ed. Goen, 32-33; Currie, 16-17, 22, 26; J. Gray McAllister, *The Life and Letters of Walter W. Moore: Second Founder and First President of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia* (Richmond: Union Theological Seminary, 1939), 372-73.
51. Orrin D. Judd, "An Historical Sketch of Colgate Rochester Divinity School" (1963), ms. in library of Colgate Rochester, Rochester, NY, 33-34; Dawley, 270-272.
52. Blackman, 264-66.
53. McLean, 335-37.

Presidents and Finances

“Where do I get the money for next year’s budget?” This question, which has troubled the sleep of many a seminary president, points to the intimate relationship between the office of president and finances. While finances have been a headache for seminary presidents, they have represented much more. They have been behind the creation of the office of president in Protestant theological seminaries and behind the shifting nature of the office throughout much of the 20th century. Other factors, of course, have also been involved in the creating and shaping of the office, but none has been so clearly present or so openly acknowledged as economics. The call for efficiency, for “planning and control,” that marked the emergence of the seminary president as an executive officer was itself rooted in changing patterns of economic activity. The rise of the seminary president as a professional manager echoed, as we have seen, developments in corporate America. This fundamental relationship of the office to the economic structure of U.S. society can be seen not only in the broad assumptions and values that informed the office but also in the various ways by which presidents have sought to answer the sleep-troubling question about next year’s budget.

“The seminary needs money, money continually,” John Knox McLean declared in his 1900 address. “In the past it has not, in measure at all commensurate with its necessities, been getting money. It is not doing so at the present time.”¹ McLean believed that the seminaries were themselves chiefly responsible for this lamentable situation. Financial agents—the predecessors of development officers—had been employed by some seminaries to try to raise funds, and they, said McLean were deserving “of a seat among the highest saints.” But more was needed for the future. The times had changed, the demand for funds had grown, and the need for sizable requests from donors was pressing. Under these circumstances, “more effective mediation” was required. This meant “the name, the presence, the dignity, the full personal weight and magnetism, of the man in whom the spirit of the institution stands most distinctly embodied”—the president.²

This chapter explores the ways in which the need for “money, money continually” has influenced the nature and character of the office of president. How have economic factors, interacting with religious traditions and distinct institutional histories, helped to shape the office?³ How have changing economic demands and sources of support impacted the office? Or perhaps most narrowly, how has the constant quest to meet next year’s budget influenced the shape and

character of the office? To address these questions, a brief review of major patterns of funding Protestant theological education is necessary.

Sources of Income

Endowments

At the beginning of the 20th century, Protestant theological seminaries had more endowment funds per student than any other institutions of higher education in the United States.⁴ A 1920s study by Robert L. Kelly, *Theological Education in America*, found that while the seminaries were not wealthy, endowments played a central role for many in meeting operating expenses.⁵ A study published in 1934 by Professor Mark May of Yale confirmed the general picture of Kelly's study. Using government reports for 1927-28, May found that independent Protestant seminaries had productive endowment funds of \$6,739 per resident student compared to \$1,818 for all privately controlled institutions and \$318 for publicly controlled institutions. In 1928-29, the seminaries studied had 60 percent of their operating income from endowments. With the depression, this percentage had fallen to 54 percent by 1934-35.⁶ Nevertheless, May concluded in 1934 that "theological seminaries as a whole, in comparison with other institutions of comparable size, are well equipped, exceptionally well endowed, and favorably situated with respect to current income."⁷

By the 1950s, significant shifts had occurred in the sources of financial support for seminaries and in the place of endowments in meeting the seminaries' current expenses. A major study of Protestant theological education written by H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, and James M. Gustafson pointed to the changes that had taken place. In 20 years, the percentage of income from endowments had dropped from the 54 percent of May's study to 32 percent.⁸ The Niebuhr report, however, noted that averages "do not tell the story." Endowments were not equally divided among the seminaries. "While the seventy-eight accredited schools [of the American Association of Theological Schools] held \$127,000,000 in invested funds in 1954-55, thirty-three of them claimed more than four-fifths of that total."⁹ The Niebuhr report identified three broad patterns of financing among Protestant seminaries: "There are schools depending primarily on endowment income, supplemented by fees from students and private gifts; there are the schools financed largely by appropriations from denominational budgets, and there are the mixed schools that derive their main income about equally from endowments and from denominations."¹⁰ Significantly, those seminaries that depended on

denominational support had experienced an almost 50 percent decline from the 1934-35 figures in the percentage of income coming from endowments.¹¹

Studies in the 1960s by the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS) pointed to a continuity with the patterns of financing in the 1950s. A 1968 AATS study reported “a surprising consistency in the relative burdens carried by the various sources of seminary income over the last several years.” Income from endowments for 1966-67 were reported to be 31.3 percent of total income compared to the 32 percent in the Niebuhr report.¹²

During the 1960s, however, costs for theological seminaries began to soar. A 1968 AATS study found that the cost per student had doubled in only 10 years, making the cost for “Protestant theological education among the highest in American education.”

Seminaries offer the most expensive higher education in North America, with the only exception being medical schools whose per student costs are higher, presumably because of the expensive laboratory equipment and clinical facilities required for medical instruction. Average costs per student in [Protestant] seminaries are 25 percent higher than in all institutions of higher education: two times as expensive as liberal arts departments, and almost one and a half times higher than in law schools.¹³

The seminaries’ small scale of enterprise obviously drove up their cost per student—relatively small enrollments meant greater costs per student. At the same time, income from endowments did not keep up with these rising costs. By the early 1970s, endowment income had fallen to 24 percent of total income for Protestant seminaries. (See Table 2.1.)

Gifts and Grants

While endowment incomes showed a steady decline as a percentage of income for Protestant theological seminaries between the 1920s and 1970s, gifts and grants showed a steady increase: from 14.6 percent in 1928-1929 to 50.6 percent in 1970-1971. (See Table 2.1.) Different sources for the gifts and grants (see Tables 2.2 and 2.3) reflected different polities and histories among the denominations and independent seminaries.¹⁴ What was clear, however, by the mid-1970s was that fundraising was becoming for almost all of the seminaries a more complex task in the face of rapidly increasing costs. As the role of endowments declined—and the need to enlarge them increased—and as the role of annual gifts and grants grew in importance, fundraising became more sophisticated and professional. This

meant not only the growth of development offices but also increased pressure for seminary presidents to become primarily fundraisers.

Tuition and Student Fees

Theological students had throughout the 19th century paid no tuition or student fees. Behind this practice was the assumption that theological students deserved the support of the church and that finances should not hinder a person’s preparation for ministry. During the early years of the 20th century, however, this practice began to change. In 1918 Union (NY) for example, began charging students tuition. President Arthur C. McGiffert, Sr., who was seeking to develop Union as a center of “theological science,” saw tuition charges as an expression of the professional character of theological education.¹⁵ As the role of endowments decreased, other seminaries began—often reluctantly—to charge tuition and student fees. These charges gradually increased as a percentage of the total income for the seminaries: from 11.4 percent in 1928-29 to 19.2 percent in 1970-72 (Table 2.1). At the same time, student financial aid increased, so that for most theological seminaries student tuition and fees added little real income to seminary budgets and did not ease significantly the pressure for constant fundraising.¹⁶

Summaries and Tables on Sources of Income

The following tables help to highlight the changes taking place in the funding of Protestant theological seminaries and point toward the ways those changes influenced the office of seminary president.¹⁷

TABLE 2.1

**CHANGES IN SOURCES OF INCOME FOR THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS
BETWEEN 1928 AND 1971, IN PERCENTAGES**

Income Source	1928-29		1934-35	1954-55	1966-67	1970-71
Student fees	11.4	13.0	18.0	18.0	19.2	
Endowment	61.1	54.0	32.0	31.3	24.0	
Gifts and grants		14.6	24.0	35.6	42.3	50.6
Other		7.7	8.1	14.4	8.4	6.2

The increase in gifts and grants reflected the growing importance of denominational support for theological education. The following table illustrates significant denominational differences in the degree to which the seminaries were dependent on direct support from the churches and different channels through which church funds came to the seminaries.¹⁸ Denominational support was nevertheless critical for all of the schools.

TABLE 2.2

**SOURCES OF INCOME FOR THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS
AFFILIATED WITH ELEVEN PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS,
1970-1971, IN PERCENTAGES**

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Tuition and fees</u>	<u>Endowment earnings</u>	<u>Gifts and grants</u>	<u>Other</u>
Am. Baptist	20	34	40	6
Am. Lutheran	20	3	73	3
Disciples	20	31	44	4
Episcopal	18	43	34	4
Lutheran Church in America	12	10	79	1
Lutheran Mo. Synod	27	2	66	4
Presbyterian, U.S.	13	45	31	10
Southern Baptist	10	12	70	4
United Church of Christ	24	28	39	9
United Methodist	24	28	48	10
United Presbyterian	21	35	37	7

The gifts and grants, as indicated, did not all come from the same sources but from a variety of sources that increased the complexity of fundraising. The following table shows denominational patterns in 1970-71 for the sources of gifts and grants.

TABLE 2.3

**SOURCES OF GIFTS AND GRANTS FOR THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS
AFFILIATED WITH ELEVEN PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS,
1970-71¹⁹**

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>National</u>	<u>Regional</u>	<u>Local</u>	<u>Church group</u>	<u>Church fndns</u>	<u>Indivi- duals</u>	<u>Other</u>
American Baptist	4	5	31	4	4	44	7
American Lutheran	87	4		3		1	5
Disciples of Christ	61		6			19	14
Episcopal	7	2	22	6	8	44	11
Luth. Ch. in Am.	8	82	1	5		2	3
Luth. Ch. Mo. Synod	91		1	1	1	5	2
Presbyterian, U.S.		74	1	1	9	15	1
Southern Baptist	94					4	1
UCC	23	29	22	1	5	19	3
United Methodist	79	3	1	2	1	6	9
United Presbyterian	73		2		2	19	3

Patterns of support for this increasingly important category of income would consequently shape where presidents would give much of their fundraising energies. Presidents of Southern Baptist Convention seminaries, for example, faced the task of “working” the national convention for most of their gifts and grants, while presidents of American Baptist seminaries and deans of Episcopal seminaries had to give more time to nurturing their relationships with wealthy donors for substantial amounts of their gifts and grants. Funding sources thus worked their ways on presidential schedules, presidential styles and values, presidential successes and failures. The very character of the seminary presidency, and the character of those who would successfully fill it, consequently reflected in large measure the peculiar demands of particular income sources.

Finances and the Office of President

During the early years of the century, when endowments played such a dominant role for many seminaries, presidents were not preoccupied with fundraising. To be sure, their biographies and the histories of the seminaries show them concerned about finances and wondering how they would meet their next year’s budget. But fundraising was much more evenly balanced among the presidents’ many activities and responsibilities. It had not yet taken on the

professional and technical character—nor the frantic pace—of late 20th-century fundraising. The office of president consequently allowed more time than it would in later years for classroom teaching, scholarly pursuits and direct involvement with students and faculty. A few examples are illustrative of a broad pattern of president as teacher and scholar.

Union Theological Seminary in New York provides perhaps the best-known examples of presidents who were teachers and scholars. Charles Cuthbert Hall, “who guided the seminary into the twentieth century,” was widely published in missions and world religions. His successor, the distinguished Old Testament scholar Francis Brown, was best known for his *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, prepared in cooperation with Charles Briggs and S. R. Driver. The widely published church historian, Arthur C. McGiffert, Sr., followed Brown as president in 1917. The tradition of the president teaching a nearly full load continued at Union until Henry P. Van Dusen found during his long presidency (1945-63) that the increasing pressure of presidential duties required a sharp reduction in his classroom teaching.²⁰

At Garrett Theological Seminary, Charles J. Little came to the seminary presidency from the faculty of Syracuse University and served from 1895 to 1911. During his tenure, Little occupied the chair of historical theology and published extensively. He was followed in the presidency by the scholarly Charles M. Stuart and from 1924 to 1932 by the well-known Old Testament scholar, Frederick Eiselen, who “had a clear understanding with the trustees that he would not handle finance.”²¹ For Episcopal seminaries, a similar pattern could be seen at General Theological Seminary whose long-time dean H. E. W. Fosbroke exhibited a “restless and meticulous scholarship.”²²

Many of the Lutheran seminaries had an established tradition of teacher-scholars as presidents.²³ Augustus H. Strong, president of Rochester Theological Seminary at the beginning of the 20th century and author of the widely used *Systematic Theology*, represented a scholarly tradition among presidents of Baptist theological seminaries.²⁴ Both Lutheran and Baptist seminaries—many of which did not have large endowments—had sufficient denominational support to allow their presidents to carry significant classroom teaching and to be engaged in scholarly pursuits.

Teacher-scholar presidents often attended to the financial needs of their institutions through close personal relationships with one or two wealthy patrons.²⁵ These patrons, who were frequently members of the seminary’s board of directors, played a vigorous part in the institution’s life. A good example was the relationship between Walter W. Moore, first president of Union Theological

Seminary in Virginia (1904-1926) and George W. Watts of Durham, North Carolina, Union's "First Permanent President of the Board of Trustees." Watts not only provided substantial funds for the move of Union from the little village of Farmville to Richmond but was also among his affluent friends a persuasive advocate on behalf of the seminary. A trusted adviser to Moore, Watts helped to guide Union during a period of impressive growth and made generous contributions to the seminary's endowment.²⁶ In 1927 Moore's portrait was placed beside Watts in the seminary's Watts Hall. "With rare fitness," wrote Moore's biographer, "the portraits of the first President of the Seminary and the First Permanent President of the Board of Trustees, devoted personal friends and co-laborers in service, hang side by side."²⁷

Such relationships were not unusual during the early decades of the century, and they stand out as a characteristic of the seminary presidency during these years.²⁸ To be sure, the pattern was present to some extent much later,²⁹ but as fundraising became more demanding and complex, seminary presidents found that they had to "cast their nets more broadly," and the older pattern of one or two primary benefactors was not so clearly present by midcentury.

As funding patterns began to change, seminary presidents had less time to teach in the classroom and to engage in scholarly work. Walter Moore, for example, did continue to teach Old Testament and to write during his long presidency, but he found that increasingly he had to reduce these aspects of his work. "It became clear to me," he wrote five years into his presidency, "that I had to make a choice between being a scholar and being an administrator, and it was made clear to me that I must sacrifice my preference and become for the best part of my life a sort of *factotum* here as to all manner of details." Still, he was able to continue teaching and writing almost to his death in 1927. "I do not know," wrote his friend W. S. Currell, president of the University of South Carolina, "how you find time amid your many duties to do so much good writing. It seems to me that presidential functions superinduce permanent pen paralysis. It certainly does interfere with the agility of one's intellectual lucubrations."³⁰ Moore's successors had little time for classroom teaching or writing.³¹

The decline after the 1920s in the percentage of income derived from endowments, and the increase in the percentage of income from gifts and grants coming directly from supporting denominations, meant that the seminary presidency became more closely identified with denominational leadership. Seminary presidents found that a critical part of their work was nurturing a positive relationship with their supporting denominations at a variety of levels. From the 1930s through the 1960s, seminary presidents would be among the most influential leaders in

Protestant churches of the United States.³² The rapid rise of this newly created office to such a prominent and powerful place in Protestant churches was a tribute to the character and dedication of many of the early presidents who worked hard to strengthen relationships with constituencies. At the same time, boards of directors and trustees, realizing the importance of having a strong churchman in the office, clearly turned in their selection of presidents to men who were widely known and respected in their denominations. But the economic realities of funding Protestant seminaries during this period also had its part to play in creating seminary presidents who gave much of their time and energy to denominational leadership.

The president as a scholar-teacher was thus largely replaced during the period 1930-60 by the president as a churchman and church leader. Such a characterization is, of course, a broad generalization—important exceptions must come to mind to those who know particular seminary and denominational histories. Early presidents who were scholar-teachers were also leaders in their denominations. And later presidents who were better known as churchmen were also sometimes known as scholars. Nevertheless, broadly speaking, one can see in Protestant theological seminaries such a change taking place.³³

By the late 1960s, the character of the office began to change once more. Again, broadly speaking, important shifts in the role and functions of seminary presidents can be observed. While the office was still widely respected, those who occupied it found themselves increasingly preoccupied with fundraising and with the demands of seeking funds beyond traditional denominational sources.³⁴ At the same time, a corresponding decline occurred in the authority of the office and the work of the president as a church leader.³⁵ Complex forces were at work in these shifts, including an emerging culture that was suspicious of leaders and authority, the decline of mainline denominations, a widespread restructuring of religion in America, and an erosion of the importance of denominational identity among many church people.³⁶

These developments echoed what was happening to college and university presidents. A widely discussed study on the “American College Presidency,” prepared for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, concluded in 1974 that the “American college presidency is a reactive job. Presidents define their role as a responsive one.” The report went on to assert that the “presidency is an illusion.”

Important aspects of the role seem to disappear on close examination. In particular, decision making in the university seems to result extensively from a process that de-couples problems and

choices and makes the president's role more commonly sporadic and symbolic than significant. Compared to the heroic expectations he and others might have, the president has modest control over the events of college life. The contributions he makes can easily be swamped by outside events or the diffuse qualities of university decision making.³⁷

In 1984 *The Chronicle of Higher Education* completed a survey of 338 college and university presidents. The nature of the presidency, noted the article, "has changed in recent years...more pressure, more work, less glory. For some of us it is almost like a new world. New clientele, new programs to meet new needs, new techniques, new competition."³⁸ No doubt many seminary presidents also felt by 1984 the pressure of "more work" and "less glory." The changing patterns of seminary funding described in this chapter constituted an important force producing "more work" and "less glory." But those changing patterns were part of larger cultural and social shifts that were having impact on the office of seminary president in ways other than directly through economics. In particular, the spreading power of bureaucratic structures and a bureaucratic world-view had been at work throughout the century reshaping the office. Seminary presidents, no less than college and university presidents, were facing by the 1980s a "new world" with "new clientele, new programs to meet new needs, new techniques, new competition." The next chapter explores the history of the seminary presidency in the 20th century in light of this "new world" and its expanding administrative complexity.

ENDNOTES

1. John Knox McLean, "The Presidency of Theological Seminaries: Should the Theological Seminary Have a Permanent President; And If So, What Should Be the Powers and Duties of the Office?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 58 (April 1901): 329-30.
2. Ibid.
3. In contrast to the classic Marxist interpretation that sees economic forces operating in a causal manner on ideas and institutions, Paul Ricoeur has recently argued that the effects of economic forces need to be understood with a *motivational* framework. See Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, George H. Taylor, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 183-197. See also Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), esp. 123-24.
4. See University of the State of New York, *Bulletin of Professional Education in the United States* 6 (1899).
5. Robert L. Kelly, *Theological Education in America* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1925), 231-35.
6. See Mark A. May and Frank K. Shuttleworth, *The Institutions that Train Ministers: Appendices* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1934), 228.
7. Ibid.

8. The loss of endowment during the 1930s was substantial for many seminaries. For examples of such losses, see Frederick A. Norwood, *From Dawn to Midday at Garrett* (Evanston, IL: Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 1978), 129-35; Howard G. Hageman, *Two Centuries Plus: The Story of New Brunswick Seminary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984), 145-56; Harland E. Hogue, *Christian Seed in Western Soil: Pacific School of Religion through a Century* (Berkeley, CA: Pacific School of Religion, 1965), 112-13; Robert T. Handy, *A History of Union Theological Seminary in New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 180; and Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr., *No Ivory Tower: The Story of the Chicago Theological Seminary* (Chicago: Chicago Theological Seminary, 1965), 229-30.
9. H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, and James M. Gustafson, *The Advancement of Theological Education* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), 30-31.
10. *Ibid.*, 32.
11. See tables in *ibid.*
12. Jesse H. Ziegler, "Protestant Theological Education in 1968," *Theological Education* 4 (Summer 1968 [Supplement 2]): 17-20.
13. *Ibid.*, 20.
14. Badgett Dillard, "Financial Support of Protestant Theological Education" (Ed.D. diss., Indiana University, 1973), 40. For the role of the annual "Theological Education Offering" for Episcopal theological seminaries, see Edward J. Dyer, "A Description of Present Financial Practices and Policies of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States in Supporting Theological Education" (Ed.D. diss., Temple University, 1965), 52-58, 67-68.
15. Handy, 144-153. Harvard and Chicago divinity schools had already begun charging tuition. *Ibid.*, 152.
16. Dillard, 32-34.
17. Table 2.1 is taken from *ibid.*, 37. The studies on which this table was based drew from different samples. Because each study included "typical" or "representative" seminaries, an "acceptable comparability" is assumed.
18. Table 2.2 is taken from *ibid.*, 31.
19. Table 2.3 is taken from *ibid.*, 41. Percentages do not necessarily add up to 100 because of rounding.
20. Handy, 103, 122, 144, 231.
21. Norwood, 47, 87-89, 107.
22. Powel Mills Dawley, *The Story of the General Theological Seminary: A Sesquicentennial History, 1817-1967* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 323.
23. See, for example, Abdel R. Wentz, *Gettysburg Theological Seminary*, 2 vols. (Harrisburg, PA: Evangelical Press, 1965); Carl S. Meyer, *From Log Cabin to Luther Tower: Concordia Seminary During One Hundred and Twenty-five Years* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965); C. Everett Arden, *The School of the Prophets: The Background and History of Augustana Theological Seminary* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1960), esp. 2; and Theodore G. Tappert, *History of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, 1864-1964* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1964), especially 99-100.
24. For a helpful survey of Baptist theological education, see Robert G. Torbet, "Baptist Theological Education: An Historical Survey," *Foundations* 6 (1963): 311-35.
25. For example, John Knox McLean at Pacific School of Religion (Hogue, 79-80) and successors Charles S. Nash from 1911 to 1921 (*ibid.*, 98-99) and Ronald Bridges, who served from 1945 to 1950 (*ibid.*, 140).

26. See J. Gray McAllister, *The Life and Letters of Walter W. Moore: Second Founder and First President of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia* (Richmond: Union Theological Seminary, 1939). For other examples, see Harry V. Richardson, *Walk Together, Children: The Story of the Birth and Growth of the Interdenominational Theological Center* (Atlanta: ITC Press, 1981), 94; Tappert, 89; and McGiffert, 108.
27. McAllister, 540. The other great donor to Union from this period was W. W. Spence, Moore's "devoted personal friend." *Ibid.*, 561. Spence's portrait was placed opposite Moore's and Watts's in Watts Hall.
28. For other examples, compare the relationship of John Knox McLean (Pacific School of Religion) with Edward T. Earl; Charles Cuthberth Hall (Union, NY) with John Crosby Brown; and J. McDowell Richards (Columbia) with John B. Campbell.
29. One thinks, for example, of Fuller presidents' relationships with Charles Fuller and C. Davis Weyerhaeuser or Princeton presidents' relationships with trustee and financial adviser John Templeton.
30. McAllister, 423, 495.
31. To compare the published works of Walter W. Moore and his successors Benjamin R. Lacy and James A. Jones, see Harold B. Prince, ed., *A Presbyterian Bibliography* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, and The American Theological Library Association, 1983), 229-32, 173-74, 164. For examples of other seminaries, see Tappert, 112 (Philadelphia); William T. Ingram, Jr., *A History of Memphis Theological Seminary of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 1852-1990* (Memphis: Memphis Theological Seminary Press, 1990), 204 (Memphis); McGiffert, 131 (Chicago); and Meyer, 59 (Concordia).
32. Among the prominent presidents with great influence during this period were Henry Sloane Coffin and Henry P. Van Dusen of Union, NY, John A. Mackay of Princeton, Horace Greeley Smith of Garrett, Ellis Adams Fuller of Southern Baptist, Edward C. Fendt of Evangelical Lutheran, J. McDowell Richards of Columbia, Frederick W. Schroeder of Eden, and Norman L. Trott of Wesley.
33. This trend can be seen most clearly in the institutional histories of the seminaries. A good example can be found in Hageman, 171, 174.
34. See J. Evangelauf, "Presidents Say They Are Spending More Time Away from Campuses," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 21, 1984, 1. See also Leon Pacala, "The Presidential Experience in Theological Education: A Study of Executive Leadership," *Theological Education* 29 (Autumn 1992): 25.
35. For the larger cultural context and the general decline of authority in U.S. society, see Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), esp. 154-86.
36. These widely noted developments, and substantial literature on them, are conveniently summarized in Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney, *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987). See esp. 52, 62, and 63-65. See also Robert Wuthnow's important *The Restructuring of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), esp. his discussion of the growing cleavage between religious conservatives and religious liberals.
37. Michael D. Cohen and James G. March, *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), 1-2. For a more positive view for the leadership possibilities of the college president, see Clark Kerr and Marian L. Gade, *The Many Lives of Academic Presidents: Time, Place & Character* (Washington, DC: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1986).
38. Evangelauf, 1.

The President as Administrator

When John Knox McLean looked over the seminary scene in 1900, he saw among the seminaries' major deficiencies "the want of a well-qualified head of affairs whose business it should be to give supreme attention to the institution's general development and administration."¹ To remedy this administrative deficiency, seminaries created the modern office of president. The quest for administrative efficiency and order, which characterized an emerging corporate America, played, as we have seen, a large role in shaping the office, while the professional manager, skilled in modern techniques of administration, provided an influential model for what it meant to be a seminary president. For the first seminary presidents and for their successors, the changing assumptions, values, and techniques of the professional manager created powerful images that largely informed changing styles of their administrative leadership. The seminary presidency in the 20th century has thus reflected—if often from a distance and if often following the example of colleges and universities—the larger story of corporate America. A modern society's need for efficient management, its widespread confidence in planning and control—and in know-how and standardization—and the growing power and complexities of bureaucracies have all helped to provide the social and cultural context in which seminary presidents have sought to be good administrators.²

Corporate America was not, however, the only context helping to shape the nature and practice of seminary administration. Seminaries stood within distinct religious and educational traditions with their own memories and languages. These traditions often provided alternate ways and metaphors for administration that were in competition with those that emerged out of 20th-century business practices. Moreover, each seminary also had its own institutional history and ethos that inevitably played a part in shaping the ways a president approached the tasks of governance.³ This chapter explores the growing administrative apparatus of Protestant seminaries in the 20th century and the emergence of three powerful metaphors that have been used for presidential leadership—the president as church leader, the president as pastor, and the president as chief executive officer (CEO). The relationship of these metaphors to competing understandings of the institutional character of theological seminaries provides a context for exploring some of the tensions faced by presidents.

Expanding Administrative Staffs

Administrative staffs typically remained small at most theological seminaries until the 1950s. During the first five decades of the century, a busy seminary president might have a secretary who handled correspondence and other secretarial responsibilities, was postmistress for the seminary, handled student accounts and arranged payrolls, kept an eye on the buildings and grounds, and generally saw after much of the day-to-day operations of the institution.⁴ In addition, a familiar administrator early in the century was the financial agent who went about raising funds and was frequently away from the campus for extended periods. Some seminaries also had an “assistant to the president,” a position that was used to relieve administrative pressures on the president. At Eden Theological Seminary, for example, Allen Wehrli came in the 1920s as an assistant to President Samuel D. Press. Wehrli “functioned for many years as the registrar, the only administrative officer other than president and business manager.”⁵ Business managers were employed in some seminaries,⁶ although many seminaries—hard as it seems today—managed to function smoothly with part-time treasurers.⁷

These small administrative staffs remained the norm until the 1950s. Then the great waves of new students, stirred by the revival of religion that had begun during the Second World War, transformed much of the character of Protestant seminaries in the United States.⁸ In the 33 seminaries studied in the Niebuhr report, the number of students enrolled in 1955 was approximately double the number enrolled in 1940. The number of administrators, however, was more than two and a half times the number in 1940, while the number of full-time faculty had grown only modestly.⁹ An American Association of Theological Schools study published in 1968 found that between 1956 and 1966 administrative costs for seminaries had “been growing faster than average total costs and that, in 1966, they accounted for one out of every four dollars spent by seminaries.” The study suggested that these “administrative costs appear to be due to a general upgrading in the quality of noninstructional personnel. Where many administrative tasks were once performed by semi-skilled and sometimes part-time staff, seminaries now appear to be turning to trained personnel for many responsibilities such as business management.”¹⁰

An important administrative position that began to be widely adopted by seminaries in the 1950s and '60s was that of academic dean or dean of the faculty. As seminary presidents found themselves increasingly preoccupied with public relations and other responsibilities,¹¹ academic deans began to be appointed as a

way of seeing after the internal affairs of the seminaries. Interestingly, at the very time the bureaucratic character of the seminaries was expanding, the new deans had as one of their major responsibilities the nurturing of a sense of community among the faculty. “The strong sense of community” that existed among the faculty of Union (NY) in 1960, was, according to President Henry P. Van Dusen, the work of the dean of the faculty.¹² Union’s first dean of faculty was Reinhold Niebuhr (1950-55), who was followed by John Bennett (1955-63). As these examples suggest, academic deans in the 1950s and ’60s were generally not yet full-time administrators.¹³ By the 1980s, however, many deans of faculty found themselves in a situation that presidents had experienced in the early decades of the century—administrative responsibilities left little room for classroom teaching and for scholarly work.

The expansion of administrative staffs continued in the 1970s, accelerated by expanding programs, in particular the Doctor of Ministry degree and continuing education. The increased demands for fundraising described in the previous chapter meant enlarged development offices: secretaries were needed to handle expanding mailing lists, directors of seminary publications began to be employed, and more development officers were needed to write funding proposals, meet with prospective donors, and maintain cordial relationships with alumni/alumnae.¹⁴ While some seminaries had long had an office of dean of students,¹⁵ enlarged enrollments and the demand for student services meant a second dean with another secretary in many seminaries.

The actual expansion of administrative staff at two seminaries is illustrative. At Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, staff members increased from 19 to 60 between 1965 and 1980. Administrative “support staff” at Columbia Theological Seminary increased from 10 in 1965 to 40 in 1989.¹⁶

This expansion of administrative staff did not take place in a vacuum but was, of course, part of a general expansion of the administrative apparatus in North American higher education. The emergence of the “multiversity” greatly enlarged administrative bureaucracies in order to handle the complexity of institutions that included by 1970 not only undergraduate and graduate colleges but professional schools, high-profile athletic programs, research institutes, hospitals, sprawling real estate operations, and a bewildering array of other enterprises.¹⁷ The possibility of a faculty—if one could still speak of *a* faculty in a multiversity¹⁸—confronting questions of the broader purposes of education became remote. Academic policy largely became, as a consequence, the responsibility of administrative bureaucracies. These developments in colleges and universities provided models of expanding bureaucracies and “services” that were constantly before the seminaries.

The growth of administrative staffs at Protestant seminaries was clearly intended to be, among other things, a help to the seminary presidents, a way of relieving them from some of the pressures that were building within the office of president. And while there can be little doubt that expanding staffs took many burdens from presidential shoulders, they also presented presidents with new difficulties. Managing a growing staff was itself a demanding task for presidents. But more fundamental were the tensions that developed between a seminary's understanding of itself as a community and the assumptions, values, and practices connected with a seminary's emerging bureaucratic character. A brief exploration of competing metaphors of presidential leadership can provide an introduction into these tensions.

Metaphors of Administrative Leadership

The tensions alluded to above point toward the important role played by a metaphor of leadership. A metaphor—such as president as pastor—provided a way of conceiving of the office of president, of shaping and constructing it. The metaphor used to describe the presidency serves a productive function: it expresses the way a president or a seminary believes the president *ought* to act. A dominant metaphor provides guidance for the administrative style of a president, suggesting conceptions of decision making and governance. Of course, a metaphor can also be used to conceal and distort the realities of seminary governance, hiding the values and practices of administration while legitimizing those in authority.¹⁹ This ideological function of a metaphor is a reminder that metaphors of leadership do not spring unadorned from the heads of seminary presidents but emerge out of particular social and cultural contexts.

What, then, are some of the metaphors that have been used to describe the seminary presidency? Some helpful suggestions can be drawn from the work of Michael Cohen and James March in their explorations of metaphors used for college and university presidents. They found two clusters of metaphors—one around organizational-administrative images and one around entrepreneurial-competitive market images. The first cluster includes images of presidents as managers, as politicians, as mediators, and as “chairmen.” The second promotes images of presidents as entrepreneurs, catalysts, judges, and philosopher-kings.²⁰ While these images are suggestive for seminary presidents and point toward influential conceptions of the office, they are not drawn sharply enough to identify some of the specific images that have been closely associated with the seminary presidency.

One set of metaphors has clustered around the image of the seminary president as a *church leader*. Frequently the image has been of the president as the embodiment of denominational leadership or of a religious tradition. E. Y. Mullins of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was regarded as “Mr. Southern Baptist.” People, wrote the historian of Wesley Theological Seminary, thought of Thomas Hamilton Lewis as “Mr. Methodist Protestant.”²¹ John Knox McLean of Pacific School of Religion was “almost the incarnation of Congregationalism throughout the Pacific Coast.”²² Samuel D. Press of Eden was “the faithful embodiment of the convictions of the *Kirchenverein* [The Evangelical Church-Union of the West].”²³ A great 19th-century exemplar of such an image was Carl F. W. Walther of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis who “almost achieved an identification of his life and soul with that of his beloved synod.”²⁴

Such an image of the seminary president provided the office with substantial authority and helped to shape the style of presidential leadership. Not infrequently it meant an autocratic and paternalistic administrative style where the president “makes all the decisions.” J. McDowell Richards, for example, appointed, without the help of search committees, all new faculty members during his long and distinguished tenure (1932-1971) as president of Columbia. On one occasion in the early 1960s, the biblical department discovered as it was planning for the next year’s courses that Richards had decided, without consultation, not to renew the contract with one of the professors of Bible. Five years later, the same department learned that a new professor of biblical theology had been appointed without any conversation with the department.²⁵ A similar style of administrative leadership was frequently practiced by other presidents who were distinguished churchmen.²⁶

A second set of images has focused on the metaphor of the president as a *pastor*.²⁷ Many presidents as ordained ministers—and almost all have been²⁸—have thought of themselves as pastors in a non-congregational setting. “I had thought,” wrote J. McDowell Richards in 1969, “I was leaving the pastorate when I came to the office of seminary president, but on the contrary, I was granted the privilege of being a pastor to generations of students.”²⁹ Earlier in the century a common practice was to call presidents from the pastorate, a practice that continues today in some denominations.³⁰ The Niebuhr study found in 1955 that presidents had 14.5 “average years of pastoral experience.”³¹ Not infrequently presidents have gone from their seminary work into a pastoral charge. Some seminaries have had a pattern of their presidents (or deans in Episcopal seminaries) becoming bishops.³² Given this background—together with the emphasis most seminaries have on preparing pastors and the general context of a seminary’s

life in relationship to the church—it is not surprising that many presidents have thought of themselves as pastors. As late as 1992, a study by Leon Pacala of The Association of Theological Schools discovered that most seminary presidents still think of themselves as pastors.³³ For a seminary president to envision the office of president as in some way a pastoral office has meant at least that the work and authority of the president, images of relating, and styles of administration have been drawn from long traditions of pastoral leadership.

The influence of particular religious and denominational traditions have been, under such circumstances, of critical importance as they have given a variety of meanings to “pastor” as a metaphor of leadership. In all the traditions, however, to be a pastor means to be related in some way to a *community* of faith.³⁴ Yet few pastors have to make decisions about hiring and firing members of their congregations (and what disasters such decisions often are!) or about promoting or giving tenure to them. The tensions—and the illusions—created by the metaphor are clear and yet the metaphor of pastor-president and the understanding of the seminary as a community continue as powerful shaping forces in Protestant seminaries.³⁵

A third set of images has swirled around the metaphor of the president as a CEO. This metaphor, obviously drawn from the world of corporate America, has become increasingly popular in the last few decades as the administrative structures of seminaries have grown more complex.³⁶ The president as a CEO carries with it the assumptions and values of the technological society and the style of administration of the professional manager. A 1990 Ph.D. dissertation, for example, on “The Nature of Excellence and Leadership at Christian Theological Seminaries” asked “Who are the seminary CEOs and how do they compare with other CEOs?” Utilizing the methodologies of leadership and management studies, the author asks: “What is the relationship between CEO leadership [in seminaries] and effectiveness?” and suggests ways of “improving the effectiveness measures.”³⁷ The language that surrounds and informs the president as CEO is clearly not the traditional language of the church—“cost effective,” “bottom line,” and “personnel” give hints of powerful guiding concepts rooted in contemporary business practices that largely shape the administrative style of the president as CEO.

As with other metaphors, this one can hide as well as reveal. It can conjure up the image of the seminary president with power to make decisions that matter, to act decisively from the lonely post at the top, to say “go” and people will go, “hop” and people will hop. What it conceals is the degree to which presidents are

enmeshed in complex systems that significantly limit presidential power. Committees meet and make decisions, boards and churches look over presidential shoulders, and institutional traditions say, "This is the way things are done." "It is tempting and perhaps valuable," wrote John Kenneth Galbraith in *The New Industrial State*, for the "corporate personality" to attribute to a CEO "power of decision that, in fact, belongs to a dull and not easily comprehended collectivity. Nor is it a valid explanation that the boss, though impotent on specific questions, acts on broad issues of policy. Such issues of policy, if genuine, are pre-eminently the ones that require the specialized information of the group."³⁸

In their study of college and university presidents, Michael Cohen and James March reached a similar conclusion about academic CEOs. "The American college presidency is a reactive job," they insisted. "Presidents define their role as a responsive one.... They allocate their time by a process that is largely controlled by the desires of others." For Cohen and March, the "presidency is an illusion." Decision making "seems to result extensively from a process that de-couples problems and choices and makes the president's role more commonly sporadic and symbolic than significant." In contrast to the "heroic expectations" a president and others may have about the power of the president, "the president has modest control over the events of college life."³⁹

Perhaps ironically, it may be that the greater the bureaucratic apparatus in a seminary, the more illusory is the image of the president as powerful CEO. Late 20th-century seminary presidents, who are known as and who think of themselves as CEOs, may in fact have significantly less authority and power than many of their predecessors. Earlier generations of presidents, while deeply influenced by the role of the professional manager, also drew images of the presidential office from traditions and languages different from corporate America and were less restrained by well-organized faculty and student committees.

These three metaphors have been primary competitors for interpreting and construing the seminary presidency. To be sure, there have been other metaphors—presidents as scholars or perhaps presidents as politicians—but these metaphors have not competed for the imagination of presidents as have the three discussed above. In particular, the president as pastor and the president as CEO have presented conflicting images of the office and rival conceptions of the nature of theological seminaries. The competition has frequently raged nowhere more fiercely than in presidents themselves who feel opposing impulses—to be "pastoral" and to be a CEO. Behind much of the tension between these two impulses is the question: "How is a seminary to be understood?"

“Community” or Bureaucratic Organization?

In his seminal study, *Economy and Society*, Max Weber explored at the beginning of the 20th century two types of social connections or bonds. Weber, following earlier German sociologists, identified one type of relational connection as *Gemeinschaft*—a community where people have a sense of belonging together and of being linked through emotional ties. In such a community, people feel they share purposeful work that promotes a common life together. Conflict, especially conflict that emerges out of different social roles, is largely denied in the quest for the experience of “community.”

Weber’s second type, *Gesellschaft*, is an association based on contractual links. This was the type of connection seen in modern bureaucracies. People have social roles linked to one another without the entanglements of emotional ties. Weber saw the associative relationship as the more rational of the two and as the predominate one in the modern economic relationships of the capitalist system. Conflicts are not hidden or denied but are addressed through contracts. Workers relate to administrative systems not out of a sense of belonging but through clearly established contractual arrangements.⁴⁰

Protestant theological seminaries, drawing on biblical and theological images of the church, have frequently understood themselves as communities.⁴¹ The idea of conflict as an integral part of seminary life, particularly conflict as a result of different social roles within the seminary, has been largely resisted or confessed as a failure of community.⁴² Yet the creation of the office of president with administrative authority and responsibilities and the growing bureaucratic complexity of seminary life in the 20th century have been indications that seminaries are more than communities. They have increasingly taken on the character of organizations governed by contractual arrangements.⁴³

Many of the tensions seminary presidents have faced as administrators have been rooted in a seminary’s understanding of itself as a community and its organization of itself on the basis of modern management practices. Presidents, for example, who have thought of themselves as in some way pastors in the midst of seminary communities have had to struggle with the competing values and assumptions of modern management’s quest for efficiency in the midst of expanding administrative bureaucracies. When Colvin Baird became president of Memphis Theological Seminary in 1978, he “embraced structural arrangements whereby the tasks of the Seminary could be performed” and carefully drew up an organizational chart in good management style. Yet he also declared his intention “to approach administration from a pastoral perspective and the understanding of the Seminary as a Covenant Community.”⁴⁴

Personal relationships and the sense of belonging to a community can obscure for those employed by a seminary the realities of contractual arrangements and of administrative structures. To those who believe themselves to be part of a seminary community, linked through emotional ties with colleagues in a common work, presidential decisions based on the values and assumptions of the manager—of the CEO—can appear to be “cold and calculating,” a betrayal of personal relationships and a threat to the character of the seminary as a “covenant community.” In such circumstances, the seminaries themselves have the appearance of a hybrid *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* organization—educational institutions of the church, set within a modern social context, that must exist in a tension between competing worlds and values.

Behind this tension have been the question “How is a seminary to be ordered?” and the issues of power, authority, and legitimacy. The creation of the office of seminary president represented a movement from a group as a whole—the faculty—providing organizational unity and direction, to an administration claiming the power to enforce order and to issue orders others were willing to accept. From the first, seminary presidents as administrators needed to legitimize their growing authority and to find ways to issue orders successfully. The ideology of the professional manager, with its values of efficiency, planning, and control, provided for seminary presidents a legitimization of their authority. With the support of board members, many of whom came from the world of corporate America, and with the penetration of much of North American society by bureaucratic organizations and their worldview, the legitimacy of presidential authority as a CEO seemed “natural.”

In spite of the legitimizing power of the ideology of the professional manager, the older understanding of the seminary as a community stood as a subversive alternative to the seminary as a *Gesellschaft*. A solution to the resulting tensions appeared to be provided by changing styles of management, first widely noted in the 1950s. In his influential book, *The Lonely Crowd*, David Riesman pointed to the need in modern bureaucratic organizations for persons who could “get along” and cooperate with colleagues in the midst of complex organizations.⁴⁵ New “scientific” theories of management called for styles of administration that allowed people to speak their minds, that sought decisions based on consensus, and that based authority on therapeutic values and techniques.⁴⁶ Michael Maccoby noted in his 1976 study of the corporate “gamesman” that a new-style manager had emerged whose “ideology and character support hierarchy even though he is neither paternalistic nor authoritarian.” The manager, using therapeutic modes of control, could keep subordinates “in their place” while appearing to remain their friendly adviser.⁴⁷

In 1981, Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* developed themes from Weber on the professional manager. MacIntyre called attention to the ways the manager and the therapist had become dominant types in modern society and to the links between the two.⁴⁸ Robert Bellah and his associates, in their widely discussed *Habits of the Heart*, pointed in 1985 to the coalescing of "the managerial and the therapeutic modes."⁴⁹ This coalescing of the managerial and therapeutic appears to have provided by the 1970s a style of administrative leadership well suited for seminary presidents, bridging not only the gulf between many presidents' desire to be "pastors" and their need to be effective CEOs but also the distance between the seminary as a *Gemeinschaft* and the seminary as a *Gesellschaft*. The extent to which seminary presidents adopted such a therapeutic style of administration will need to be explored in the Lilly Endowment studies of the contemporary presidency. What is clear, however, from a historical perspective, is that many seminary presidents have faced a genuine tension between their understanding of themselves as pastors working within seminary communities and the demands of efficient management practices. Moreover, the "triumph of the therapeutic" in North American culture had a profound impact on the ethos of most Protestant theological seminaries in the United States,⁵⁰ making them hospitable organizations for a therapeutic style of administration. Certainly many of the management courses that began to be taught in the seminaries in the 1970s reflected a coalescing of the manager and the therapist, who between them "largely define the outlines of 20th-century America."⁵¹

ENDNOTES

1. John Knox McLean, "The Presidency of Theological Seminaries: Should the Theological Seminary Have a Permanent President: And if So, What Should Be the Powers and Duties of the Office?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 58 (April 1901): 329.
2. See Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: the Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976).
3. The important point here is that religious institutions are not simply reflections of their social-cultural contexts—although they are certainly that. See Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), esp. 95.
4. See J. McDowell Richards, *As I Remember It: Columbia Theological Seminary 1932-1971* (Decatur, GA: CTS Press, 1985), 46-47; Robert T. Handy, *A History of Union Theological Seminary in New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 221. Alvin Rogness, president at Luther from 1955 to 1976, once jokingly told his predecessor Thaddeus Gullixson (1930-54) that Rogness had made his first mistake by getting a telephone and a secretary. Had he "held the line," the office of president might have remained an uncomplicated post. Under Rogness, Luther had become one of the largest theological seminaries in the country and, "for good or for ill," was "also a far more complex operation

than even twenty years ago." Warren A. Quanbeck, et al., *Striving for Ministry* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977), 52-53.

5. Walter Brueggemann, *Ethos & Ecumenism, An Evangelical Blend: A History of Eden Theological Seminary, 1925-1975* (Saint Louis: Eden Publishing House, 1975), 11.

6. For example, when John H. C. Fritz relinquished his duties as dean at Concordia in 1940, the board of control found it necessary to assign some of his duties to a business manager who was responsible for "the physical and financial welfare of the institution." Ten years later "the administration" included only two positions: a president and a dean/ registrar. The next year a "business executive" (the business manager) and a "director of libraries" were added. See Carl S. Meyer, *From Log Cabin to Luther Tower: Concordia Seminary During One Hundred and Twenty-five Years Toward a More Excellent Ministry, 1839-1964* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 200. See also Theodore G. Tappert, *History of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, 1864-1964* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1964), 56; and Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr., *No Ivory Tower: The Story of the Chicago Theological Seminary* (Chicago: Chicago Theological Seminary, 1965), 176, 178.

7. See Jesse H. Ziegler, "The Economics and Organization of Theological Education," *Theological Education* 4 (Summer 1968 [Supplement 2]): 29-30.

8. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 949-63. The increasing numbers of seminary students after World War II reflected not only the religious revival of the period but also the deferral because of the depression and the war of a generation from all forms of higher education.

9. H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, and James M. Gustafson, *The Advancement of Theological Education* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), 17.

10. Ziegler, 30.

11. See Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson, 68.

12. Handy, 220.

13. For example, Wesley's first academic dean, Harold DeWolf (1965-1972), continued to be engaged in teaching and scholarly pursuits. Douglas R. Chandler, ed. C. C. Goen, *Pilgrimage of Faith: A Centennial History of Wesley Theological Seminary, 1882-1982*, (Washington, DC: Seven Locks Press, 1984), 243-45.

14. An example of these familiar developments can be seen at Evangelical Lutheran Seminary in Ohio. See Donald L. Huber, *Educating Lutheran Pastors in Ohio, 1830-1980: A History of Trinity Lutheran Seminary and its Predecessors* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), 245-296. See also McGiffert, 270-71.

15. Union (NY) provides a good example. In 1950, a dean of women was added at the same time the first academic dean was appointed. See Handy, 220-22.

16. The statistics on staffing at Andover Newton, New Orleans Baptist, Southern Baptist, Columbia, Lexington, and Luther Northwest (and its predecessors) were gathered from librarians of these institutions. See also institutional histories that cover 1960-90 for the growth of staffs.

17. For the development of the university, see Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); George Keller, *Academic Strategy: The Management Revolution in American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983). See also Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 146-47.

18. See Michael D. Cohen and James G. March, *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974).

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19. See Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).
20. Cohen and March, 39.
21. Chandler, ed. Goen, 18.
22. Harland E. Hogue, *Christian Seed in Western Soil: Pacific School of Religion through a Century* (Berkeley, CA: Pacific School of Religion, 1965), 90.
23. Brueggemann, 2.
24. Ahlstrom, 757.
25. Charles B. Cousar, interview with author, Decatur, GA, June 14, 1994.
26. See, for example, Robert T. Handy's descriptions of the leadership styles of Henry Sloane Coffin and Henry P. Van Dusen and their leadership in the church: Handy, 188, 207, 216, 260. See also C. Everett Arden, *The School of the Prophets: The Background and History of Augustana Theological Seminary, 1860-1960* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1960), 148; Powel Mills Dawley, *The Story of the General Theological Seminary: A Sesquicentennial History, 1817-1967* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 295; and Tappert, 115.
27. For examples of pastoral assumptions and functions for the presidential office, see Dawley, 130-31, 297; Thomas White Currie, *Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary: A Seventy-fifth Anniversary History* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1987), 67; Arden, 148; McGiffert, 173-75; Hogue, 131; and Richards, 92.
28. See Lawrence W. Raphael, "A Study of the Nature of Excellence and Leadership at Christian Theological Seminaries" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1990), 141.
29. Richards, 92.
30. In 1993 the following Presbyterian seminaries had presidents called directly from the pastorate: Princeton, Union in VA, Columbia, and San Francisco. For this pattern at Chicago, see McGiffert, 152, 219, 228, 252, 294.
31. Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson, 19. These figures apparently included deans of Episcopal seminaries.
32. For the history of Garrett presidents, see Frederick A. Norwood, *From Dawn to Midday at Garrett* (Evanston, IL: Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 1978), 47, 129, 132, 177.
33. "More than any other single term, presidents describe their leadership as pastoral" (Leon Pacala, "The Presidential Experience in Theological Education: A Study of Executive Leadership," *Theological Education* 29 [Autumn 1992]: 29; see also 27-28).
34. For an illuminating debate in the 19th century at Episcopal (Cambridge) about having a "pastoral head" in a seminary, see George L. Blackman, *Faith and Freedom: A Study of Theological Education and the Episcopal Theological School* (New York: Seabury Press, 1967), 102-4.
35. See Handy, 220.
36. Lawrence W. Raphael, for example, used the title CEO in his study of leadership at "Christian Theological Seminaries." "All top administrators, regardless of title, are referred to [in his study] as CEOs," Raphael, 8.
37. *Ibid.*, 148.
38. John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), 69.
39. Cohen and March, 1-2.

40. Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 40ff. See also Paul Ricoeur's treatment of Weber's use of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* in *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, ed. George H. Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 189-97.
41. See, for example, Handy, 220; Blackman, 226.
42. "Since the end of the Second World War," wrote the historian of Episcopal, Cambridge, "the increase in the number of students, in the number of professors, in the number of administrators, has, gradually, simply crowded out the small-scale intimacy which had been characteristic of the School in former times." Blackman, 376.
43. A good example can be found in Chandler, ed. Goen, 236-42.
44. William T. Ingram, Jr., ed., *A History of Memphis Theological Seminary of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 1852-1990* (Memphis: Memphis Theological Seminary Press, 1990), 175.
45. David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).
46. See Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960). Note McGregor's use of the psychiatrist Abraham Maslow, 35-42.
47. See Michael Maccoby, *The Gamesman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 102, 122, 129, 137.
48. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 24-31, 70-75, 81-83.
49. Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 139.
50. See E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 210-342; and see Philip Reiff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Note that this coalescing of the therapeutic and managerial can also be seen in the pastorate where a "senior pastor" is sometimes referred to as the CEO.
51. Bellah, 47. Important books for the new management courses in the seminaries included Peter F. Drucker, *The Effective Executive* (London: Heinemann, 1967); Alvin Lindgren, *Foundations of Purposeful Church Administration* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1965); and James Anderson and Edgar Jones, *The Management of Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978).

Relationships: Boards, Faculties, Staffs, Students, and Constituencies

The administrative style of a president, discussed in the previous chapter, gives important hints about the ways a president relates to various groups within a seminary. In particular, dominant metaphors of leadership reveal styles of relating as well as many of the assumptions that surround and shape a president's relationships. This chapter seeks to explore those relationships in greater detail by focusing on presidents' relationships to boards, faculties, staffs, students, and constituencies.

Boards

Seminary boards have responsibility for the general governance of their respective institutions. The Niebuhr study identified in the 1950s four types of boards: "1) boards elected by national denominational bodies; 2) boards elected by regional church groups, such as dioceses, synods, presbyteries, associations, et cetera; 3) self-perpetuating boards; and 4) boards representing a number of organizations, such as educational societies, alumni, denominational education commissions, et cetera." The last group was the smallest, representing approximately 10 percent of schools studied. The other three groups were approximately equal in size.¹ Each group has had some particular characteristics in its relationship to presidents; for example, the last group has perhaps required the attention of a president on a more regular basis because of its cumbersome nature.² The way a board is elected does not, however, seem ordinarily to have made as much a difference in its relationship to a president as the history and ethos of an institution, the personality and style of a president, and the general health of the seminary. The exception has been when board members have been appointed by a strong denominational executive with essentially unchecked power. The conflicts between Southern Baptist seminary presidents and Southern Baptist Convention presidents in the 1980s and 1990s (to be discussed later) point to the ways in which the selection of board members can be of vital importance to seminary presidents.

While there have been some important exceptions, boards have most often played a vigorous part in seminary life only at certain critical moments—especially the founding of a seminary and during periods of turmoil and crisis.³ At

times other than these, 20th-century boards have had a strong tendency to arrive on a campus, go about their business of receiving reports and giving approval to decisions recommended by presidents and administrative staffs, and then, after offering their guidance, support, and blessing, leave the campus until the next scheduled meeting.⁴ Individual board members have also been frequently involved in securing funds, and whole boards have sometimes organized themselves for major fundraising campaigns. Obviously under such circumstances, presidents have a relationship of established trust, confidence, and good will with their boards.

While presidents with such relationships of trust have been legion within Protestant seminaries, an illuminating example was the relationship between president Harry V. Richardson and the board of the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC). A federation of predominantly African American theological seminaries, ITC's board was composed of representatives from the participating denominations plus members at large.⁵ Given the potential under such circumstances for interdenominational rivalries and disputes, a relationship of mutual trust and support between board and president was particularly critical. Richardson not only gained that trust and support, he also won the personal affection of many board members.

A retirement letter to Richardson from a board member—who was himself the president of a large and influential theological seminary—reveals important sources of such trust. First, there was admiration for the work that Richardson had accomplished and for the coherent and consistent vision that had directed Richardson's efforts. Richardson, it was said, had been able to catch the imagination of the board with his "initiating vision." By drawing board members into an active pursuit of that vision with him, Richardson laid the foundation for the trust and confidence he enjoyed with the board. Second, Richardson was seen to be a person of good judgment. He possessed, said the letter writer, "unfailing wisdom" that expressed itself in "resolute but restrained determination." The "determination" pointed toward a clear vision boldly pursued; the "resolute" and "restrained" indicated Richardson's activist style tempered by good judgment and moderation—a style that encouraged confidence among the board members. Third, his dedication to ITC and his personal character evoked in board members admiration and trust. Board members believed him to be genuine, a man of faith without guile. "More than most persons I know," wrote the board member, "you have epitomized and *lived* an authentic Christian faith and dedication."⁶ When boards have perceived presidents to have some combination of these three elements—a guiding and winsome vision, good judgment, and a trustworthy

character—they have had a strong tendency to give presidents their enthusiastic support.

These characteristics echo important ingredients that college and university boards want in a president. “By their accounts and those of presidents,” wrote Clark Kerr and Marian L. Gade in their *The Many Lives of Academic Presidents*, most trustees look for:

Integrity—they want to know the truth about the institution, good and bad.

Competence—the ability to appoint capable staff members, to prepare an agenda and a budget, and to carry out decisions.

Good external relations—with the alumni in a residential college, the local community in a community college, the governor and legislators in a state-supported institution.

Effective consultation with the board—early discussion of important issues, adequate information in general, and never any surprises.

Adaptability—the ability to handle the unexpected, the unprogrammed, the undesired.

Tranquility on campus—nothing that hits the media except for winning sports teams. Although, as one said, “I can’t hold back the new world.”⁷

Not all seminary boards, of course, have had confidence in presidents, nor have they let them—or seminary faculties—“run the show.”⁸ Some seminaries have had long traditions of boards being involved in the detailed affairs of the schools. At Virginia Episcopal, for example, in the 19th century, the board “interfered with enthusiasm in the most minute details of seminary administration.” The trustees “reserved to themselves the approval of all textbooks used in the seminary, and prescribed details of classroom work in a fashion that a modern faculty would find intolerable.”⁹

More consequential have been 20th-century conflicts between boards and presidents. Lester Allen Welliver, president of Westminster in Maryland from 1945 to 1955, had a long and painful dispute with his board over conflicting visions for Westminster. Welliver expanded the faculty from five to 15, oversaw the establishment of a new curriculum, and saw the student body increase significantly. Yet in spite of such an impressive record, Welliver met serious opposition from the board—particularly from the powerful Methodist bishop G. Bromley Oxnam. Welliver was a vigorous advocate for the development of Westminster in its rural Maryland location, but Oxnam wanted the seminary moved to Washington, DC, to a location adjacent to American University. When

the board voted for the move, Welliver soon found himself having to deal with a “Board of Governors that had deserted his program, a faculty torn between the excitement of the move and anxiety about their president, and the displeasure of a bishop notoriously intolerant of dissent.” Welliver endured “eighteen months of strain and tension before submitting his resignation.”¹⁰

The most bitter and widely known dispute in the 1970s was the Concordia, St. Louis, conflict (1973-74) that led to the formation of a new seminary and a split in the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. While this complex conflict will be treated in more detail in a later chapter, an important element in it was the struggle between Concordia’s president John H. Tietjen and a board that came to be controlled by representatives of synod president Jacob A. O. Preus. Concordia, at the time “the largest Lutheran seminary in the world,”¹¹ was under attack for several years by conservative forces within the Missouri Synod for alleged heresy among the faculty. Tietjen defended the faculty and resisted attacks against himself. When Tietjen was dismissed, the great majority of students and faculty withdrew to form Seminex, “Concordia Seminary in Exile.” Even at the time, observers saw in the attacks a rising tide of fundamentalism and heard in the charges clear echoes of the ideological conflict that had been dividing Americans since the mid-1960s.¹²

Such open conflicts between boards and presidents have been relatively rare in Protestant seminaries and have generally been part of much larger conflicts. Much more typical have been relationships of mutual trust and respect that have been based on common commitments, shared visions, and a sense on the part of both boards and presidents that they have a responsibility to be supportive of one another. In his retirement, J. Davison Philips of Columbia noted that “A director who listens to the president, [and] gives clear and persuasive counsel...is invaluable. I do give thanks to God ‘Upon every remembrance of them.’”¹³

With the large size of some boards, board chairs and executive committees have frequently been important advisers to presidents and essential players in making for harmonious relationships between boards and presidents.¹⁴ More recently, an increased turnover in board membership—coupled with infrequent meetings of boards—has meant that boards have more difficulty retaining institutional memories and securing clear pictures of the contemporary health and character of their seminaries. Under such circumstances, presidents and board members often do not know one another well and the good will—which has so frequently marked the relationships between boards and presidents—is more vulnerable to disruptive forces.

Faculties

The early presidents of Protestant seminaries were regarded as “first among equals” in their relationship to other faculty members.¹⁵ As we saw in the first chapter, the office of president was often rotated among faculty members, being more a “president of the faculty” than a president of the seminary. With the creation of the office in the “modern sense,” presidents’ relationships with faculties began to change. For some the change was slow—at Episcopal, the president continued to be regarded as a “first among equals” until the 1940s.¹⁶ For others, the change came early in the 20th century with presidents assuming a position in regard to faculty that was both paternalistic and autocratic.¹⁷

Several factors fueled this important shift. First, faculties were not deeply interested in questions of governance. Preoccupied with their own teaching and scholarly work, most faculty members were happy to see newly appointed presidents assume responsibilities for raising funds, performing important public relations tasks, and overseeing the general administration of their seminaries.¹⁸ Second, the modern business executive and manager provided a model for an efficient administration headed by a powerful executive acceptable to faculty. And third, the position most seminary presidents held—especially between 1920 and the mid-1960s—as highly respected “church leaders” provided presidents with substantial authority in their relationships with their faculties.

Presidents exercised this authority in a variety of ways, but none was clearer than in their selection of new faculty members. In earlier generations, the process had been dominated by boards and faculties. By the 1930s, however, many presidents had the power and authority to select new faculty members to present to their boards for approval.¹⁹ Some presidents began to be known as “builders of faculties,” making important “appointments.”²⁰ In an Afterword to Henry Sloane Coffin’s *A Half Century of Union Theological Seminary*, Henry P. Van Dusen wrote what many presidents, even in much more modest circumstances, must have felt: “The ceaseless quest for scholarly talent continues a relentless duty as well as an exciting preoccupation.”²¹

However powerful a seminary president may have been in relationship to faculty during these decades, that power was always circumscribed. Senior tenured faculty, while not generally interested in administration, were also not interested in being “administered.” A president’s ability, for example, to settle disputes between faculty members or to direct faculty discussions or decisions was limited, particularly if theological disputes were involved and if faculty

members “had the ear” of influential constituencies. J. McDowell Richards, the president of Columbia from 1932 to 1971, noted in his retirement how little he was able to do to mediate a dispute between two senior faculty members—one was a powerful theological voice for conservatives in the denomination and the other, representing a more liberal perspective, served a term as moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. Faculty meetings under the circumstances were frequently “less pleasant than one would have desired.” Richards, for all his authority, apparently felt on occasion some significant faculty constraints on his ability to act.²²

The growing pressures on presidents to be fundraisers and the increasing size of administrative staffs after the Second World War influenced presidents’ relationships to faculties. As presidents found themselves more often away from their campuses on fundraising trips, their engagement with their faculties and with faculty issues began to lessen. The appointment of deans of faculty—which began to be widely made in the 1950s—was intended to address questions of faculty leadership when presidents were away or were preoccupied with the growing demands on the presidential office. However, the appointment of the new deans also created an administrative layer between presidents and faculties.

Seminary presidents began to have less direct contact with their faculties as a result of these various developments. In this regard they reflected what was happening to college presidents. “Contrary to some modern impressions,” noted a 1974 Carnegie report, “college presidents do not spend very much time talking to students or faculty.” The report estimated “10 to 15 percent of presidential contacts are with faculty who do not hold administrative positions.”²³ Given the smaller size of seminaries, their presidents no doubt have had more opportunity to talk directly with faculty members. But the general picture holds—the older pattern of frequent contact between seminary presidents and faculties was fading by the 1970s and 1980s. Expectations of faculty and president might continue to be governed by memories of earlier days and by understandings of the seminary as a community, but the demands on the presidential office, the growing administrative structures of seminaries, and the changing nature of seminaries into complex institutions made older patterns difficult to maintain.

Closely linked to these developments was the rise of faculty committees. The Niebuhr report noted in the 1950s that some seminaries had “a highly rationalized organization of a faculty into committees with carefully defined responsibilities.” Such “teacher bureaucracies” were sometimes allowed “so to develop that a large

part of the time of many teachers is taken up with administrative duties.” This development was identified by the report as one of the “chief defects” of good seminary administration.²⁴ Whatever the extent of such a “defect” in the 1950s, by the 1980s it had become a widely adopted pattern in seminary governance. The “democratic revolution” of the late 1960s and early ’70s, with its insistence on “participatory democracy,” encouraged faculties to “take responsibility for themselves”—as did, more indirectly, federal regulations governing employment practices. Certainly styles of administration that exhibited paternalism or autocracy had become highly suspect by the 1970s.²⁵

One consequence of these developments was a shift once again in the relationship between seminary presidents and faculties. Few presidents, for example, by the 1980s would be making “appointments” to faculty positions without the recommendations of faculty search committees that had gone through a long and careful process. Because presidents often met with these committees, the committees provided an important counter-balance to the increasing distance between faculty and presidents noted above. Nevertheless, the pattern was clear—presidents’ relationships with faculties were marked by a growing distance most simply demonstrated by geography and presidential calendars. Traveling far and wide attempting to meet the insatiable demand for funds and being called upon to represent their institutions in innumerable settings, presidents had fewer opportunities to be in contact with faculty members or their discussions and concerns.²⁶

Staffs

The growing staffs that increasingly populated theological seminaries after the Second World War meant that presidents had to learn the new skill of relating to treasurers and development officers, deans of faculty and deans of students, admission and financial aid officers, registrars, and a host of secretaries for this or that. While little exists in the histories of the seminaries about the ways presidents have related to staff—a perhaps revealing omission about the delicacy of president-staff relationships—such relationships have no doubt been of great importance in shaping the character of a seminary during a particular presidency. A president and staff that have worked well together, forming a “working team,” have been more likely to address successfully the specific tasks of their various offices. When, however, a president and staff have formed a dysfunctional group—especially when mutual distrust has festered—the consequences have often been felt throughout a seminary. Two issues of presidents’ relationships to staff call for special note.

First is the question of a president's delegating responsibilities to staff. A study in the late 1980s found that many seminary "CEOs" thought of themselves as having a "delegating" style of leadership. The "CEOs" interviewed "claimed to have a mature staff of subordinates to whom they regularly delegated much responsibility." Questionnaires, however, showed that many presidents had styles other than that of delegators. The self-image, in other words, of some presidents and the analysis of their behavior in specific circumstances showed an important discrepancy in regard to delegating.²⁷

A second and closely related issue has been the degree to which a president has "looked over the shoulder" of staff members. Has a president trusted staff with a broad range of responsibilities, leaving them to address those responsibilities and develop an area of a seminary's life, or has a president regularly probed the details of a staff member's delegated work, seeking to make sure it was "done right"? The answer to this question obviously has not depended solely on the style of a president but also on the competence and trustworthiness of a staff and its particular members. A president who inherited a well-entrenched staff member—a development officer, for example, who was both hostile to the new administration and difficult to dismiss—may have felt with good reason a compelling need "to keep a close eye" on a potential "troublemaker."

A president's relationship with staff is consequently of great importance to a seminary's life. Many seminaries have recognized this fact and have sought to address it by having staff serve "at the pleasure of the president."²⁸

Students

The metaphor of the president as a pastor carried with it assumptions about the relationship of the seminary president to seminary students. At the beginning of the century, many presidents sought to be good pastors to their students by being a "father" to them. In the 1920s Hugh Latimer Elderdice, president of Westminster, never allowed his "presidential dignity" to stand in the way when students needed his help. "When they were sick, he nursed them and carried food to their rooms from his home next door. He reported news to their concerned parents, made their appointments with doctors, and found substitutes for their parish duties." He also "spoke sharply" to those who were not dressing properly during the winter months and exercised "eternal vigilance" over their moral life, especially in relationship to nearby college women. Elderdice's home was always open to

students and to graduates returning to campus.²⁹ It was a pattern other presidents followed. As late as 1956, when a student complained to J. McDowell Richards of the noise in the dormitory, the student was invited to move in with the Richards family. The student stayed for two years, living in an upstairs bedroom, sharing in meals and family devotions.³⁰

A part of such pastoral responsibilities for presidents involved transmitting a tradition of propriety and introducing students into a ministerial ethos. Some presidents taught courses on ministry and almost all felt a responsibility at opening convocations and other such occasions to lecture students on manners and expected standards of behavior.³¹ During the 1921-22 academic year, for example, president Walter W. Moore of Union in Virginia, addressed students on such subjects as "Power," "Avoid Short Cuts," "Ministerial Manners," "Manliness in the Ministry," and "The Minister and Money." The last was a particularly popular subject. President Moore noted: "Nothing will more certainly destroy a minister's influence than indifference to pecuniary obligations.... To the world the acid test is a minister's relation to debt."³²

Presidential interest frequently followed students after they graduated, recommending them for calls and appointments. Certainly much of the authority that presidents enjoyed earlier in the century was nurtured by the grateful memories of former students and by the advice and help presidents continued to provide graduates.

By the late 1960s, the pastoral image still played an important role in presidents' understanding of their relationship to students, but the meaning of "pastoral" had for growing numbers lost much of its "fatherly" content in favor of the values of a therapeutic culture. At Garrett Theological Seminary, president Orville McKay sought to establish a "pastoral administration" based on "enablement, encouragement, cooperative spirit, and above all democratic openness."³³

The same factors that influenced presidents' relationships with faculties also affected their relationships with students, in particular any hopes a president might have to be a pastor to students. The demands of fundraising and public relations left presidents less time for students and their concerns, while growing staffs inserted additional administrative layers between presidents and students: deans of students began to handle "student affairs," admissions officers and financial aid officers assumed some of the student-related responsibilities of earlier presidents, and alumni/ae officers began to be charged with maintaining many of the personal relationships with graduates.

Two additional factors had an important influence on presidents' relationships with students. One was a changing student population. The role of president

as “pastor and father” to students had been largely based on assumptions about the seminary being a community, “our seminary family.” An early president at Augustana, T. N. Hasselquist, was, for example, described as being like a “patriarch among the children of Israel” presiding over “this close-knit community”—a vivid description that fit many later presidents.³⁴ In such contexts, presidents could claim “father knows best” and receive the admiration and affection of a largely young, residential student body that was overwhelmingly male and in a single degree program. By the early 1970s that student profile was beginning to show signs of significant change: students were older and often married; women were entering seminaries in large numbers for the first time; and many students, in some cases most, no longer lived on campus, ate on campus, or worshiped on campus.³⁵

Second, the seminaries began, following the Second World War, to add degree programs that changed the nature of the student body. Indeed, in a number of seminaries it was difficult by the 1980s to identify *a* student body. Rather, diverse student bodies began to exist that were united in one seminary primarily through administrative structures.

Under such circumstances, a president’s relationship to students changed. The earlier, more personal models of relating were difficult if not impossible to maintain. Two large seminaries provide illuminating examples. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary had been founded in 1908. During the first five decades of its life, the size and composition of Southwestern allowed the president to know many of the students personally and relate directly to them. In the 1970s, it began to expand rapidly and by 1988 its student body had grown to the largest seminary in the country with 4,001 students enrolled in eight degree programs taught by 110 full-time faculty and 85 part-time faculty.³⁶

Fuller Theological Seminary, founded in 1947, was during its early years a “school designed for white gentlemen.” As late as 1972, its total enrollment was under 500.³⁷ Edward Carnell, president during the 1950s, was remembered two decades later by graduates as the person who had the greatest impact on them while they were students.³⁸ During the 1970s, however, Fuller grew by leaps and bounds and was by 1988 the second largest seminary in the country with 2670 students in five degree programs. By then, the seminary had so many extensions in scattered cities and so many special programs that much of its enrollment was part-time, its full-time equivalent being 1,370.³⁹

For such “mega-seminaries” as Southwestern and Fuller, presidents functioned as CEOs over large staffs and multiple administrative structures. Their relationship with most students was inevitably one of distance and only occa-

sional contact. Of course, most Protestant seminaries—the great majority—were much smaller than Southwestern and Fuller, even with the expansion of seminary programs in the 1970s and 1980s. But the size of Southwestern and Fuller simply makes vivid what was happening in much smaller seminaries as the role of presidents changed, as CEO became an influential metaphor for presidents, and presidents' relationships to students left behind some of the older patterns of familiarity and friendship.

Constituencies

Seminaries have had various and sometimes competing constituencies calling for a president's attention. Some seminaries have had clearly defined constituencies marked by denominational and geographic boundaries.⁴⁰ Others, especially Lutheran seminaries, have had constituencies identified by ethnic and language boundaries.⁴¹ Still others have had constituencies drawn from broad movements with less clearly defined boundaries, such as neo-evangelicalism or Protestant liberalism.⁴² Some older Eastern seminaries—with Princeton Theological Seminary as a prime example—have identified themselves as having a national constituency that crosses many boundaries and flows together into a "mainstream."⁴³

Whatever the diversity of constituencies for seminaries, all have graduates who have called for the attention of seminary presidents. One way attention has been given is through presidents' recommending graduates for ministerial or teaching positions. Henry P. Van Dusen, for example, was particularly "skilled at locating openings in church and educational institutions for recent graduates."⁴⁴ Hugh Latimer Elderdice, who was such a solicitous "pastor and father" to students at Westminster in Maryland, was so respected by the presidents and appointing committees of the various annual conferences of the Protestant Methodist Church that they "gave over the task of student church appointments" to him, "accepting his assignments without question." On his part, "Elderdice was always careful to seem to defer to conference authority."⁴⁵ From the 1920s to the 1960s, the presidents of the four Southern Presbyterian seminaries were at the top of a complex "cousin system" that recommended pastors for calls long after they graduated from the seminaries.⁴⁶

A variety of factors after the 1960s weakened a president's ability to "place" graduates and to relate to them as a successful sponsor. Perhaps the most important were broad cultural shifts that emphasized "equal opportunity," an "open process," and bureaucratic rather than personal mechanisms for "place-

ments." In addition, the changing relationship of presidents to students, the growing number of graduates who were not part of traditional, on-campus degree programs, and the creation of staff positions to relate to graduates made the earlier role of the president as a "placement officer" increasingly obsolete. These developments did not mean, however, that presidents had less contact with graduates than their predecessors. On the contrary, the fact that presidents were frequently away from their campuses provided opportunities for them to see and visit with graduates on a regular basis and to cultivate new, cooperative—and nonpaternalistic—relationships with them.

Much of presidents' travel from the earliest days of the office was intended to nurture relationships with laity and denominational leaders. One of the continuing and most difficult tasks of presidents has been to interpret for these constituencies the theological position of their seminaries and their faculties. Were the seminaries, for example, remaining true to the confessional documents of Lutheran orthodoxy or were they being compromised by Anglo-Saxon evangelicalism or liberalism?⁴⁷ Was modernism infiltrating Southern Baptist Seminary? President E. Y. Mullins had to address this question over and over in the early decades of the century, as did President Roy L. Honeycutt in the 1980s.⁴⁸

While the task of interpreting theological positions to constituencies has been important for many seminary presidents, it has been particularly important for presidents of independent seminaries that do not have denominational ties that provide stable, continuing constituencies.⁴⁹

Edward Carnell saw this challenge clearly from his position as president of Fuller. In 1957 he made a "fundraising tour." He called on some "very wealthy cattlemen, dealers in rice and cotton, ranchers, oilmen, and custodians of foundations." He "kissed babies, inspected turkey hatcheries, rode around vast ranches, listened to small talk, and sat hours in an unventilated room with children who were in the last stages of Asian flu." In spite of his efforts, "we brought no direct gifts to the seminary." Carnell concluded that "Fuller Seminary has no real constituency." It had no connection with a denomination, and the "wealthy have no conception of the new evangelicalism."⁵⁰ The task that Carnell and his successor David Hubbard faced was interpreting the meaning of "the new evangelicalism" and building a constituency around Fuller as the embodiment of that interpretation. By the 1980s, Fuller had succeeded, largely under Hubbard's direction, in building a new, broad, evangelical coalition that provided the seminary with a strong, identifiable constituency.⁵¹

No less than the ability of a president to build a constituency, the expectations of supporting constituencies have played an important part in shaping the office

of seminary president. Certainly a president's successes or failures have been largely judged by supporting constituencies in light of their values and assumptions. As a consequence, presidents have had to identify key constituencies and listen carefully to their demanding and often competing voices. What presidents have heard and their skill in responding to what they have heard have often been distinguishing marks of their presidencies.

Presidents' relationships to boards, faculties, staffs, students, and influential constituencies thus reflect the changing character of the presidential office in the 20th century. At times, presidents, supported by admiring boards, have functioned as "authority figures"—governing with a firm if paternal hand faculty and students, recommending graduates, and advising congregations and church agencies. More recently presidents, possessed of less authority, have been less authoritarian and paternalistic. Even as the demands of the office have put greater distance between presidents and seminary faculties and students, presidents have been turning toward more open and collegial relationships. In this turning, they have been demonstrating the complex interaction between streams of religious traditions and a managerial-therapeutic culture. Indeed, what we see in all these changing patterns of relationships are the ways religious traditions, the ethos of specific schools, the personality, style, and vision of individual presidents, and specific cultural contexts interact to shape the nature and character of the seminary presidency.

ENDNOTES

1. H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, and James M. Gustafson, *The Advancement of Theological Education* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), 43.
2. *Ibid.*
3. See Glenn T. Miller, *Piety and Intellect: the Aims and Purposes of Ante-Bellum Theological Education* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 32; Robert T. Handy, *A History of Union Theological Seminary in New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 1-23; George L. Blackman, *Faith and Freedom: A Study of Theological Education and the Episcopal Theological School* (New York: Seabury Press, 1967), 72-93; Frederick A. Norwood, *From Dawn to Midday at Garrett* (Evanston, IL: Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 1978), 3-43; Theodore G. Tappert, *History of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, 1864-1964*, (Philadelphia: Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1964), 68, 80.
4. See, for example, Handy, 219.
5. Harry V. Richardson, *Walk Together, Children: The Story of the Birth and Growth of the Interdenominational Theological Center* (Atlanta: ITC Press, 1981), 53-59.
6. *Ibid.*, 120-21.
7. Clark Kerr and Marian L. Gade, *The Many Lives of Academic Presidents: Time, Place & Character* (Washington, DC: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1986), 29.
8. See, for example, Tappert, esp. 68, 80; and Norwood, 16.

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9. Blackman, 32-33. For the example of Philadelphia, see Tappert, especially 68, 80.
10. Douglas R. Chandler, ed. C. C. Goen, *Pilgrimage of Faith: A Centennial History of Wesley Theological Seminary, 1882-1982* (Washington, DC: Seven Locks Press, 1984), 174.
11. See Martin E. Marty, "Missouri's Exiles: Heartbreak, Ashes—And Victory," *Christian Century*, June 12, 1974, 630-32.
12. See Robert Jewett, "The Gospel as Heresy: Concordia Seminary in Exile," *Christian Century*, March 27, 1974, 336-40, esp. 339.
13. J. Davison Philips, *Time of Blessing, Time of Hope: Columbia Theological Seminary, 1976-1986* (Decatur, GA: CTS Press, 1994), 59.
14. Board member John Templeton, for example, was an important adviser to James McCord of Princeton.
15. See Norwood, 39.
16. Blackman, 364.
17. See, for example, Chandler, ed. Goen, 33-95; Handy, 188; and Powel Mills Dawley, *The Story of the General Theological Seminary: A Sesquicentennial History, 1817-1967* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 270-71.
18. See John Knox McLean, "The Presidency of Theological Seminaries: Should the Theological Seminaries Have a Permanent President; And if So, what Should Be the Powers and Duties of the Office?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 58 (April 1901): 332.
19. See, for example, William T. Ingram, Jr., *A History of Memphis Theological Seminary of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 1852-1990* (Memphis: Memphis Theological Seminary Press, 1990), 181; Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr., *No Ivory Tower: The Story of the Chicago Theological Seminary* (Chicago: Chicago Theological Seminary, 1965) 155; and Chandler, ed. Goen, 42, 112.
20. Ozora Davis at Chicago, for example, before he resigned in 1928, used a bequest to re-shape the academic curriculum by additions to the faculty in novel fields. Six of eight men appointed to the faculty in the late 1920s taught in experimental areas that were completely or almost completely new departures in theological education. See McGiffert, 185. At Philadelphia, Charles M. Jacobs became president in 1927 and oversaw a new plan for the development of the faculty. "My personal opinion," Jacobs said in his first year, "is that the seminary should have a relatively small faculty composed entirely of heads of departments, to be assisted in their teaching work by a corps of assistant professors and instructors" (Tappert, 95). Examples of other presidents known as "builders of faculties" include Frederick Schroeder of Eden (Walter Brueggemann, *Ethos & Ecumenism, An Evangelical Blend: A History of Eden Theological Seminary, 1925-1975* [Saint Louis: Eden Publishing House, 1975]); Thaddeus Gullixson of Luther (Warren A. Quanbeck et al., *Striving for Ministry* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977], 46); David Stitt at Austin Presbyterian (Thomas White Currie, *Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary; A Seventy-fifth Anniversary History* [San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1978], 173); Benton Kline and J. Davison Philips at Columbia (Philips, 7); and Wilford Lash Robbins at General (Dawley, 305, 320, 335).
21. Henry Sloane Coffin, *A Half Century of Union Theological Seminary, 1896-1945: An Informal History* (New York: Scribner, 1954), 241.
22. Notes of author from interview with Richards, April 1983, for work on J. McDowell Richards, *As I Remember It: Columbia Theological Seminary, 1932-1971* (Decatur, GA: CTS Press, 1985).
23. Michael D. Cohen and James G. March, *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), 131.
24. Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson, 48, 43-44.

25. See Kerr and Gade, 106-10.
26. See, however, the conclusion of Lawrence Raphael that seminary presidents have difficulty delegating much responsibility to staffs and faculty. "These CEOs [seminary presidents], knowledgeable, involved and experienced as they are about the culture, as well as the educational and professional goals of their seminaries, appear to be delegating less than their general college counterparts." Lawrence W. Raphael, "A Study of the Nature of Excellence and Leadership at Christian Theological Seminaries" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1990), 118.
27. *Ibid.*, 119-20.
28. See, for example, "Bylaws: Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary," IV., library, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin, Texas.
29. Chandler, ed. Goen, 77-78.
30. The student was the Reverend Harry F. Peterson. He served as a missionary in Taiwan, Ghana, and Nigeria and is presently the executive director of Villa International, an ecumenical guest house adjacent to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.
31. At General the president or rector was to oversee discipline (Dawley, 130). At Concordia the administration attempted to keep students under a rather rigid code of conduct. A revised code in the 1920s listed 89 rules, including those that required worship attendance, and those that forbade students from engaging "in secular occupations" during the school year, or singing "frivolous and improper songs," or visiting "theaters, operas, and similar performances," or more generally, partaking "in sinful amusement" (Carl S. Meyer, *From Log Cabin to Luther Tower: Concordia Seminary During One Hundred and Twenty-five Years* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965], 220-21).
32. J. Gray McAllister, *The Life and Letters of Walter W. Moore: Second Founder and First President of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia* (Richmond: Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1939), 506.
33. Norwood, 177.
34. C. Everett Arden, *The School of the Prophets: The Background and History of Augustana Theological Seminary, 1860-1960* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1960), 148.
35. See, for example, *Fact Book on Theological Education* (Vandalia, OH: The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, 1978).
36. See ATS Directory: *Bulletin 38, Part 4* (Vandalia, Ohio, 1988), 44. See also the yearly "Statistical Report for Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools" in the *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention*.
37. George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 264.
38. *Ibid.*, 301-2.
39. ATS Directory, *Bulletin 38, Part 4*, 19.
40. These boundaries are conveniently summarized in Badgett Dillard, "Financial Support of Protestant Theological Education" (Ed.D. diss., Indiana University, 1973), 47-64.
41. See Jerald C. Brauer, "Lutheranism in American Theological Education," *Concordia Theological Seminary Monthly* 36 (1965): 373-84; Arden, 112, 144-45, 169; Tappert, 63; and Donald L. Huber, *Educating Lutheran Pastors in Ohio, 1830-1980: A History of Trinity Lutheran Seminary and its Predecessors* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), 41-73.
42. See Marsden, 180, 263-76; and Handy, 95-120.

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43. See Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 813; and see *Princeton Theological Seminary, Catalog*, 1993, esp. 23, 24, 29.
44. Handy, 216.
45. Chandler, ed. Goen, 63.
46. This "cousin system," with its social and cultural roots, is explored in Erskine Clarke, *"Our Little World": The Children of Geneva in the South Carolina Low Country, 1680-1980* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, forthcoming).
47. This complex story can be seen most clearly in Huber.
48. See William E. Ellis, "A Man of Books and a Man of the People": E. Y. Mullins and the Crisis of Moderate Southern Baptist Leadership (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985), 83-104, 185-208; "SBC Holy War," *Christian Century*, September 12, 1984, 826; and Bill J. Leonard, "Another SBC Seminary Falls to Fundamentalists," *Christian Century*, March 16, 1990, 517-18.
49. President Harry V. Richardson of the Interdenominational Theological Center, for example, noted that it was largely his task to quell rumors, fears, and misunderstandings, to keep up good will and support; and to assure alumni of the seminaries that their denominational interests were being preserved (Richardson, 60).
50. Marsden, 180.
51. See *ibid.*, 291-92.

Presidential Profiles

Presidents of Protestant theological seminaries in the United States have shared certain broad social characteristics. To be sure, these seminary presidents have had their personal idiosyncrasies, contrasting gifts, and varied commitments; they have not been, as one scholar said of college presidents, like “light bulbs”—necessary but “interchangeable.”¹ Nevertheless, seminary presidents have constituted a group with distinguishable features. This chapter seeks to discern those features and to explore the implications of such a social profile for the office of seminary president. An introductory review of the social characteristics of college and university presidents provides an important context and a comparison.

A Social Profile of College and University Presidents

In their 1974 study, Michael Cohen and James March described college presidents “today and in the recent past” as “most commonly middle-aged, married, male, white, Protestant academics from a relatively well-educated, middle-class, professional-managerial, native-born, small-town family background.” While noting “numerous exceptions to the general pattern,” they concluded that college presidents represent, “in social terms, a conventional elite group for the general population of the American college and university students and faculty.”²

Cohen and March estimated that the average age of presidents in office in 1974 was 53 and noted that over “the last 70 years that average appears to have varied slightly.”³ In a 1987 study of 330 college and university presidents, Heidrick and Struggles found the median age remained 53.⁴ Several studies confirmed that the average age of incoming presidents, between 1900 and 1987, was 46. “Taken in total, the age data indicate that American college presidents ordinarily come to the job in their mid-forties and that at any point in time most presidents are in their fifties.”⁵

These middle-aged presidents were almost all married males. A 1970 study found that, after excluding Roman Catholic schools where presidents were members of celibate orders, more than 98 percent of American college presidents were married. Again, except in Roman Catholic schools and women’s colleges, all the presidents in the 1970 study were men.⁶ With two important exceptions, all were white except presidents of predominantly Black colleges. Presidents of non-

church-related schools were, in the mid-1970s, “overwhelmingly Protestant.” Even as racial and gender barriers began slowly to break down, the typical president of a non-church-related college remained in the late 1980s a married, male, Caucasian, Protestant.⁷

The academic background of college and university presidents has generally included a doctoral degree, with the proportion of presidents with doctorates increasing steadily since the beginning of the century. Historic fields of study for presidents have been humanities, education, and religion. More recently, the social sciences have provided increasing numbers of college presidents. The academic background of presidents generally reflects the primary educational focus of a school or the dominant group within a college. Universities, for example, that emerged from teachers’ colleges most often have had presidents with degrees in education, while presidents with degrees in the humanities have been heavily concentrated in liberal arts schools.⁸

Clark Kerr and Marian L. Gade found in their 1986 study, *The Many Lives of Academic Presidents*, that 85 percent of college presidents came “directly out of academic or administrative life on a college campus.” Of the remaining 15 percent, half had some prior experience as a faculty member or administrator. “This route of access,” Kerr and Gade concluded, “is natural because academic institutions have their own ways of doing things and it is important to be acquainted intimately with them. Faculty committees usually do not fully trust outsiders for fear they will not properly respect faculty advice, protect academic freedom, or accept the slow pace of consensual decision making when, in practice, many would.”⁹ Earlier studies confirmed this pattern throughout the century.¹⁰

If there has been a prejudice against the selection of presidents from outside academia, there has also been a prejudice against selecting someone from within the institution searching for a president. Unlike corporations whose leaders are largely promoted from within, approximately 80 percent of college presidents have come “directly from outside the institution of which they become chief executive.” Kerr and Gade speculated on the reasons for this pattern. Faculties, they suggested, are reluctant to get an insider because of “internal jealousies,” “concern about prior internal commitments and friendships,” and “known imperfections.” Boards are reluctant because “trustees are more likely actually to select and be able to influence an outside appointment as ‘their’ person uniquely dependent on them.” Furthermore, “outsiders usually are easier to terminate and are more likely to leave town.”¹¹ In spite of this reluctance to select insiders, most colleges and universities select presidents from their own general type of institu-

tion. Approximately 80 percent of newly appointed community college presidents in the 1980s, for example, came from other community colleges. The exception to this pattern is the frequent attempt of a school to “marry up” and secure a president from a more prestigious institution.¹²

Of those selected, most college presidents have had some prior administrative experience—a department chair, a dean, or a vice president. Cohen and March described the path to the college presidency this way: “Most presidencies in American colleges are now occupied by individuals who entered an academic career as a college teacher, were asked at some point to assume administrative duties as a department chairman, institute director, dean, or similar position, were subsequently promoted to a higher administrative position, and then to a presidency.”¹³

This background has meant that presidents have come to their positions already deeply immersed in the ethos of academia and that they have brought with them a way of seeing the world through the eyes of the academy. It has also meant that the presidency has been the “capstone of their careers.... It is the end of a natural chain of promotion within an academic organization.”¹⁴

The tenure of presidents selected between 1900 and the mid-1970s averaged 10 to 12 years. The high point, with an average of 14 years, came in the 1930s and 1940s. A low point came in the early 1970s following student “unrest.”¹⁵ By the mid-1980s, however, the average tenure had dropped to seven years, with the percentage of presidents serving 10 years or longer dropping to only half of what it had been earlier in the century. Kerr and Gade noted that seven years had become a “magic number today” for the tenure of presidents. Possible reasons include “the accumulation of grievances by others” and “accumulation of fatigue by the incumbent.”¹⁶ Additionally, presidents have reached after seven years an age—“the *age of last opportunity*”—when they need to move if they want to find another good position. They must act before they are both too old to move and too young to retire.¹⁷

Among contemporary college presidents, approximately 15 percent of those who resign leave for another presidency; another 20 percent go to a faculty position; 15 percent go to an administrative post; 25 percent go into retirement or semiretirement; while 25 percent go to some position outside academic life—including, for many, a return to a religious career.¹⁸

The background and the career path of college presidents has obviously had an impact on the office of president. Perhaps most important has been the socialization of presidents, over substantial periods of time, into the ethos of academia. Most new presidents come to the office with 20 to 35 years of experience

in academia—first as students, then as faculty members, and finally as administrators. One result, according to Cohen and March, is that “presidents tend to be strongly committed to conventional academic values.... Quite aside from any ‘practical’ considerations that might lead them to be unable to effect major changes in their colleges and universities, presidents do not for the most part want to make major changes. They accept the institution and support it.”¹⁹ On the other hand, presidents often enter the office expecting to share common interests with faculty only to find, instead, competing interests and antagonisms.²⁰ The “place at the top” is often lonely, and presidents frequently find themselves isolated from former colleagues.²¹ In spite of such limitations, Kerr and Gade found that “about one-quarter of college presidents are very satisfied with their position, about one-half are satisfied, and about one-quarter are dissatisfied.”²²

The Seminary President: A Social Profile

A social profile of 110 presidents of Protestant seminaries—representing a variety of denominational and geographical locations—does not reveal any startling differences from the profile of college and university presidents presented above.²³ These seminary presidents, like college presidents, have been most often middle-aged and married and almost always male, white, and Protestant.

Of those seminary presidents studied, the average age, between the years 1900 and 1993, of a president when elected president, has been 49.5 years. The historic average age of a new seminary president has consequently been approximately 3.5 years older than that of a new college president. Among seminary presidents one can observe a gradual increase in this average age: from 1900 to 1930 the average was 48; from 1930 to 1970, the average was 49; and from 1970 to 1993, the average has been 51. Important variations, however, are hidden in these averages. Robert Ernest Vinson was 32 when he was elected president of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and H. E. Jacobs was 69 when he was elected president of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Both served seven years. J. McDowell Richards was a 30-year-old pastor when he was elected president of Columbia Theological Seminary, while Ludwig E. Fuerbringer was a 67-year-old professor, who had been teaching for 38 years at Concordia, St. Louis, when he was elected its president. Richards served 39 years and retired at age 69. Fuerbringer served 12 years and retired at age 79. In spite of these differences, however, the picture remains: most seminary presidents have been about 50 years old when elected.²⁴

These presidents have been, almost without exception until recently, married men. A few bachelors have appeared among them now and then, but a new president has generally brought a wife with him to serve as “the first lady of the seminary community.” The “president’s wife,” largely modeled after the “minister’s wife,” has been expected to make a comfortable home for the president, to be the hostess at various social events (often in the “president’s home”), to give special attention to the sick and those in need, and to be the president’s confidante and loyal supporter. Presidents’ wives were to be the most discreet of mortals, appearing to know little of campus politics and closed-mouthed about what little they did know. While they were not to intrude into business that was not theirs, their home was to be open to all, a hospitable place for lonely students, visiting trustees, and faculty receptions.²⁵ These traditional expectations have clearly faded in recent years as the place of women in society has shifted dramatically. If, however, the expectations have faded, they have not disappeared, and lingering memories of earlier patterns are no doubt frustrating to a busy woman who comes home from her own work to find waiting the pressures of being the “president’s wife.”²⁶

More recently, a few women have been elected seminary presidents: Barbara Brown Zikmund at Hartford Seminary, Cynthia Campbell at McCormick Theological Seminary, Ansley Coe Throckmorton at Bangor Theological Seminary, and Martha Horne at Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Virginia.²⁷ As the ancient restrictions on women have slowly given way, women trustees, women faculty and staff, and women students have helped to prepare the way for what no doubt will be increasing numbers of women presidents.²⁸

While many college presidents have been ordained ministers, they have generally gone to the presidency from an academic position. Seminary presidents, on the other hand, have been historically almost evenly divided between those who have come directly from an academic position and those who have come from pastorates, although recent trends are clearly toward new presidents coming from faculty positions.²⁹ Unlike colleges or universities, presidents of seminaries are seldom drawn from among academic deans, although once again some increase in numbers may be occurring.³⁰ Academic disciplines have apparently played little part in the selection of faculty members for seminary presidents—no one discipline stands out as the breeding ground of new presidents. A professor of systematic theology has had as good a chance of being elected president as has a professor of homiletics. Whether professor of systematic theology, homiletics, or some other discipline, many professors selected to be president have already served as a pastor, often for a significant length of time. Charles M. Jacobs, for

example, was a pastor for 12 years before beginning his teaching career at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. When he was elected president, he thought of himself as both a pastor and a professor.

Unlike college and university presidents, seminary presidents have often been “insiders,” selected from within a school’s faculty and sometimes a school’s board. “Internal jealousies,” “concern about prior internal commitments and friendships,” and “known imperfections”—said by Kerr and Gade to be among the causes for the selection of “outsiders” as college presidents—apparently have not loomed so large in the thinking of search committees for seminary presidents. On the other hand, confessional, denominational, and geographical considerations have obviously been important in the selection of many “insiders” as seminary presidents. Presidents at Concordia, for example, have most often been selected from among its faculty.³¹ For some schools, institutional traditions appear to be critical factors in the election of “insiders” to the presidency. Of the 10 modern presidents of Union (NY), six have come from Union’s faculty; additionally, Henry Sloane Coffin was a part-time faculty member, and Charles Cuthbert Hall was a member of Union’s board.³²

Some denominations and some seminaries have been more likely to call a pastor to be a seminary president. Of the five presidents who have served Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, four have come directly from the pastorate. Of the seven who have served Columbia Theological Seminary, six have come to the presidency from the pastorate. These pastors, while coming from outside the academy, have come from deep within the denominational ethos that surrounds and supports these institutions. The regional and familial nature of the former Southern Presbyterian church made these pastors “outside” insiders when they arrived on campus as new presidents. They brought with them values, a deeply internalized world-view, and a social location that were integral to the institutions they were called to serve.³³

A pattern in some seminaries has been to call presidents from denominationally linked colleges or denominational boards. Lexington Theological Seminary, for example, has had presidents come from the presidency of Lynchburg College, from the Disciples’ United Christian Missionary Society, and from the denomination’s national board of education.³⁴

Of course, many seminaries have had no single pattern, calling presidents from a variety of places and backgrounds. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary called in 1899 E. Y. Mullins from First Baptist Church in Newton, Massachusetts. Mullins was followed in 1929 by Southern’s professor of Old Testament, John R. Sampey. In 1942 Ellis Fuller, pastor of Atlanta’s First Baptist Church and president

of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, was elected president. Fuller was followed in 1951 by Duke McCall, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee. Except for Sampey, none of these presidents was from inside Southern seminary, but, once again, they were far from "outsiders" to the particular traditions and ethos of the institution.³⁵

Of the seminary presidents studied, the average length of service has varied from period to period. Those elected between 1900 and 1930 had an average tenure of 16 years; those elected between 1930 and 1970 served an average of 13 years; those elected after 1970 served an average of 6.8 years, approximately the same length as a contemporary college president.³⁶ Seven years appears to be for present-day seminary presidents, as for college presidents, a "magic number." Once again, possible reasons include "the accumulation of grievances by others," the "accumulation of fatigue by the incumbent," and the "age of last opportunity." Because contemporary presidents are older when elected, most now leave office when they are in their late 50s.

Before the 1970s, the majority of the seminary presidents studied (at least 60 percent) remained in the president's office until they retired or died. Of the remainder, some returned to classroom teaching, and others to a pastorate. Some Methodists and Episcopalians left the presidency of a seminary (or the office of dean in Episcopal seminaries) to become a bishop. Unlike college and university presidents, only a few seminary presidents have moved from the presidency of a seminary to the presidency of another academic institution. Robert Ernest Vinson left the presidency of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary to become president of the University of Texas, and Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr., moved from Pacific School of Religion to become president of Chicago Theological Seminary. But these moves represent the exceptions. The seminary presidency has not been a stepping stone to other academic positions; more often it has been the end of the "academic ladder" or for many, simply the end of the road. Given the "inside" character of so many presidencies, and the institutional loyalties represented by that character, it is not surprising that seminary presidents have not moved about in academia, even within the restricted circles of theological education. The historic pattern of most presidents to be closely associated with a denomination and with a specific seminary has discouraged much mobility.³⁷ It remains to be seen if more movement from seminary to seminary will occur among contemporary presidents, given their shorter terms of presidency, their average age on leaving office, and the increasing ecumenical character of some seminaries.

Implications for the Office of President

A president, wrote Michael Cohen and James March, “can be an effective leader for a college or university, but he is not likely to be one if he is unable to acknowledge the obvious implications of his birth, his education, his experience, and his prior personal commitments.” A college or university, they noted, “can be well served by a president, but it is likely often to be disappointed if it socializes a president in one way and asks him to behave in another.”³⁸ In thinking about the seminary presidency, what are the “obvious implications” of birth, education, experience, and prior commitments? Have seminary presidents been “socialized in one way” and asked “to behave in another”?

Perhaps the most obvious point to direct these questions is in regard to the calling of pastors to be seminary presidents. Has a pastor been socialized in a way quite different from what is required for the president of an educational institution? Do the practices and responsibilities of the pastorate so shape the character of pastors that they continue to think of themselves as pastors, even when elected seminary presidents, rather than thinking of themselves as leaders of educational institutions with very different responsibilities? Have pastors who become presidents—especially those who come from large churches—been socialized in such a manner that they regard faculty as having in some way a position comparable to that of associate pastors or church staff? Do “senior pastors” have to grapple with the “lateral relations” of an educational institution in a manner similar to business leaders who become presidents of colleges? The greatest difference, wrote Kerr and Gade, “between a college and business organization is the importance of lateral relations as against vertical ones. There are, in particular, lateral relations with faculty members who are colleagues, not employees, and colleagues with tenure; and, by rule of practice, faculty have essential influence over most of the academic life of the institution.”³⁹

Some presidents who have come directly from the pastorate have felt the force of these questions most sharply. One president in the mid-1980s, who had been a “congregational minister prior to his becoming a seminary CEO” said in an interview: “My years as a congregational minister prepared me for some aspects of my present job. What it did not prepare me for was the reaction I would get from other CEOs and from the faculty here. I have not been perceived to have had proper prior experience necessary to run this [an “elite” selective] seminary.”⁴⁰

A fundamental question, of course, is what constitutes “proper prior experience” for a seminary president, while a basic assumption appears to be that it is

the function of a president to “run” a seminary. More directly, why would other “CEOs” and faculty think that a pastorate was not “proper prior experience” for a seminary president? Did it mean that they thought a pastor would not understand the peculiar ethos and internal dynamics of an educational institution, or that pastoral experience would not prepare a person for the administrative responsibilities of a “CEO”? One president, who came directly from the pastorate in the mid-1980s, insisted that “my twenty-five years as a pastor of a congregation was the most important preparation.” The pastorate, he wrote, had provided him with good listening skills, experience in handling conflict, a leadership style that was “more consultative and consensus building” than autocratic, and an opportunity “to get over my fear of asking wealthy people for large gifts.” Most pastors, he asserted, “are grateful that the president of the seminary has been an active pastor rather than having come from the academy. They feel that I am in a better position to train pastors, having been one myself.”⁴¹ The nature and purpose of a theological institution, its relationship to the church—most specifically to the life of local congregations—and to the academy, are obviously at issue here.

If the ethos of a seminary and the interests of its faculty are more closely identified with the church than with the academy, then pastoral experience may be regarded as an important resource rather than a liability for a new president. If the purpose of the seminary is the preparation of persons for ministry in a local congregation, to call an experienced practitioner of such ministry to the presidency has appeared to many institutions a wise decision. If, on the other hand, the ethos of a seminary and the interests of its faculty are more closely identified with the academy, then the difficulties of calling a pastor may be felt more sharply, as was the case with the first pastor-president quoted above. Of course, many seminaries, perhaps most, have regarded themselves as having loyalties to both the church and the academy and have accepted the tension of living between the two. From a historical perspective, the pastorate does not appear to have socialized persons in such a way that they have been unable to function effectively as seminary presidents. Indeed, some of the most distinguished seminary presidents in the 20th century came to their presidency directly from the pastorate. Nevertheless, the tensions remain and are perhaps most clearly visible in the competing metaphors, discussed earlier of the president as pastor and president as CEO.

What then of faculty members and seminary administrators? Has the socialization process through which they have passed prepared them for the presidency? Has their background allowed them as a group to enter their new office

with a good grasp of the challenges before them and with the resources for addressing those challenges? Or have their years in educational institutions left them so strongly committed to conventional academic values that they “do not for the most part want to make major changes,” as Cohen and March said of college presidents who had risen through the ranks of academia? One need only think of the history of Union (NY) to remember seminary presidents who have come from faculty positions and who contradict such a conclusion—and others could be cited.⁴² But the question remains: does the socialization of an academic background have a tendency to produce seminary presidents committed to the conventional and largely uninterested in major change? More particularly, does an academic background, in contrast to the pastorate, mean a certain isolation from the local congregation and consequently a certain isolation from the challenges and issues emerging out of the life of congregations? Is the often-lamented distance between the seminaries and the local church encouraged by seminary presidents who have spent their lives in academia? While answers to such questions carry an unusual amount of subjectivity, it is clear that a number of seminary presidents, who arrived in their office on the wings of academic careers, have been highly esteemed by their churches and elected to important denominational positions.⁴³

Presidents who were former faculty members have often not been prepared by experience or temperament for fundraising or for the isolation of the office. Herbert A. Simon has noted for college faculties that “a professor who becomes dean or president is an émigré or a turncoat, a man who has renounced academic culture and scholarly values in favor of power and materialism.”⁴⁴ At the beginning of the century, William Rainey Harper, first president of the University of Chicago, wrote: “Another feeling which gradually grows upon the occupant of the presidential chair is that of great loneliness—the feeling of separation from all his fellows. At certain times he realizes that in all truth he is alone; for those who are ordinarily close to him seem to be, and in fact, are, far away.”⁴⁵ The “lonely position at the top” may have been particularly difficult for seminary presidents socialized in small faculties with close collegial relationships and in seminaries whose self-understanding has been dominated by the image of community.

No one path, no one process of socialization, thus emerges as *the* path and process that has best prepared seminary presidents for the challenges of their office. For the seminary president to be effective, as for the college president, a need exists for the president to acknowledge the “obvious implications” of birth, education, experience, and prior personal experience. But an equally important

task exists, one that acknowledges the nature of the institution to which a person is called as president—its history and traditions, its relationship to the church and the academy, its ethos, expectations, and challenges. The discerning of this institutional character and the matching of that character with the character of a person socialized in a particular manner has been one of the primary challenges of search committees that have selected 20th-century presidents of Protestant seminaries.

ENDNOTES

1. James G. March, "How We Talk and How We Act: Administrative Theory and Administrative Life" (Seventh David D. Henry Lecture, University of Illinois, September 1980), quoted in Clark Kerr and Marian L. Gade, *The Many Lives of Academic Presidents: Time, Place & Character* (Washington, DC: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1986), 11.
2. Michael D. Cohen and James G. March, *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), 7-9.
3. *Ibid.*, 8.
4. Heidrick and Struggles, *The University and College President* (Chicago: Heidrick and Struggles, 1987).
5. Cohen and March conveniently summarize earlier studies to reach their conclusions. See Cohen and March, 10.
6. Michael R. Ferrari, *Profiles of American College Presidents* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1970).
7. See Heidrick and Struggles.
8. Cohen and March, 13-16.
9. Kerr and Gade, 18-19.
10. See Ferrari; Nicholas J. Demerath et al., *Power, Presidents, and Professors* (New York: Basic Books, 1967); and Frank McVey and Raymond A. Hughes, *Problems of College and University Administration* (Ames, IA: Iowa State College Press, 1952).
11. Kerr and Gade, 19. Kerr and Gade remained puzzled about the reasons for this pattern.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Cohen and March, 19.
14. *Ibid.*, 16.
15. *Ibid.*, 153-164.
16. Kerr and Gade, 21-22.
17. Cohen and March, 187-193; Kerr and Gade, 22.
18. Kerr and Gade, 22.
19. Cohen and March, 25.
20. See remarks of Herbert A. Simon, quoted in Kerr and Gade, 46.

Presidential Profiles

21. A particularly poignant expression of these dilemmas can be found in Joseph Kauffman, *At the Pleasure of the Board: The Service of the College and University President* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1980), 89-92. Kauffman was president of Rhode Island College, 1968-73.
22. Kerr and Gade, 43.
23. Social profiles of presidents (or Episcopal deans) were developed for the following Protestant seminaries: Augustana, Austin, Chicago, Columbia, Concordia at Saint Louis, Eden, Episcopal, Fuller, Garrett, General, Interdenominational Theological Center, Lexington, Luther Northwestern, Lutheran at Philadelphia, Memphis, New Brunswick, Pacific School of Religion, Pittsburgh, Princeton, Southern Baptist, Southwestern Baptist, Union (NY), Union (VA), and Wesley.
24. Leon Pacala's study of presidents in office in September 1991, including Roman Catholics and heads of university divinity schools, found that: "Present incumbents range in age from the later thirties to over seventy. The median age is 53 and the mean is 52.6." Leon Pacala, "The Presidential Experience in Theological Education: A Study of Executive Leadership," *Theological Education* 29 (Autumn 1992): 14.
25. See, for example, the responsibilities and many activities of Mrs. Walter Moore in J. Gray McAllister, *The Life and Letters of Walter W. Moore: Second Founder and First President of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia* (Richmond: Union Theological Seminary, 1939). See also Kerr and Gade, 112-13.
26. At Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, for example, the role of president's wife shifted dramatically. Not merely a hostess, president David Stitt's wife, Jane Wilkinson Dupuy, was a scholar in her own right and possessed a Ph.D. (Thomas White Currie, *Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary: A Seventy-fifth Anniversary History* [San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1978], 139). At Pacific School of Religion, president Stuart Anderson's wife also served as an instructor at the school (Harland E. Hogue, *Christian Seed in Western Soil: Pacific School of Religion through a Century* [Berkeley, CA: Pacific School of Religion, 1965], 143).
27. According to the 1993-94 *Bulletin 40* of the ATS, at least six women were serving as highest ranking administrators at U.S. accredited seminaries or theology schools. In addition to presidents Zikmund, Campbell, Throckmorton, and Horne, Barbara Wheeler served as president of Auburn Theological Seminary; Donna R. Runnalls served as dean at McGill University Faculty of Religious Studies; Rebecca Parker served as president of Starr King School for the Ministry; and at Roman Catholic schools, Patricia A. Schoelles served as president at Saint Bernard's Institute while Loretta Jancoski was director of Seattle University Institute for Theological Studies. Among candidates for accreditation and associate schools, Mary Kay Klein was president of Swedenborg School of Religion for the Swedenborgian Church. Only six years earlier, a poll of 108 schools that offered the M.Div. degree (both accredited and unaccredited) revealed only *seven* which listed a woman as a top ranking administrator—and three of these seven women were listed as "registrar." See *Guide to Schools and Departments of Religion and Seminaries in the United States and Canada* (New York: Macmillan, 1987).
28. Statistics for The Association of Theological Schools indicate that from 1972 to 1992 female enrollment increased by 500 percent: in 1972 approximately 4,000 women were enrolled in theological schools, and by 1992 approximately 20,000 women were enrolled. Women represented about 10 percent of student enrollment in 1972 and more than 30 percent in 1992. See Gail Buchwalter King, *Fact Book on Theological Education for Academic Year 1992-1993* (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools, 1992). Barbara Brown Zikmund noted that mainline Protestant seminaries often have close to 50 percent women students. She also indicated that there were "still only a small number of women faculty members in North American theological schools—multiplying the demands on women

faculty to serve not only as academicians but also advisors, tutors, and mentors. See Barbara Brown Zikmund, "Women and Theological Education: North American Reflections," *Ministerial Formation* 38 (June 1987): 7-8.

29. Pacala, 13, 19-21.

30. "Academic deans tend not to be appointed to presidential offices. Seventy-six percent of present incumbents have not served as theological school deans, and 94 percent have not been college or university deans." *Ibid.*, 19.

31. Franz Pieper was a professor for about nine years before he was named president in 1887; his successor Ludwig E. Fuerbringer served as a professor for 38 years at Concordia by the time he was elected president in 1931. At Philadelphia Seminary, Charles M. Jacobs served as church history professor for 14 years before becoming president in 1927; his successor Luther Reed served as professor of liturgics and church art at the seminary; Reed's successor was Paul J. Hoh, professor of practical theology for 18 years before becoming president in 1945. Russell D. Snyder, acting president in 1952, was also selected from within the faculty. A similar pattern can be seen at Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Garrett, Union in New York, and Southern Baptist.

32. Handy, *passim*.

33. This character of the denomination and of its seminary presidents at Union and Columbia can be seen most conveniently in McAllister; in J. McDowell Richards, *As I Remember It: Columbia Theological Seminary 1932-1971* (Decatur, GA: CTS Press, 1985); and in J. Davison Philips, *Time of Blessing, Time of Hope: Columbia Theological Seminary, 1976-1986* (Decatur, GA: CTS Press, 1994).

34. These Lexington presidents were Riley Benjamin Montgomery (1945-65), who previously served as president of Lynchburg College; Stephen Jared Corey (1938-45), who had worked with the Disciples' United Christian Missionary Society; and Andrew D. Harmon (1922-28), who was previously affiliated with the denomination's national board of education.

35. William A. Mueller, *A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959).

36. See Lawrence W. Raphael, "A Study of the Nature of Excellence and Leadership at Christian Theological Seminaries" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1990), 140. Pacala found in 1991 the mean number of years in office of Protestant presidents, including deans of divinity schools, was 6.59 years. Pacala, 16.

37. Pacala noted in 1992 that "Unfortunately, theological education has not established career patterns for post-presidential years." Pacala, 14.

38. Cohen and March, 28.

39. Kerr and Gade, 54.

40. Quoted in Raphael, 142.

41. Douglas W. Oldenburg, "Reflections of a Pastor/President." Paper prepared for the Lilly study on the seminary presidency. Graduate Theological Union Library, Berkeley, California.

42. Concordia is another example of a seminary with presidents who came from the faculty and provided significant leadership once in the president's office.

43. President James McCord of Princeton provides an important example.

44. Simon is quoted in Kerr and Gade, 46.

45. Kauffman, 89.

Controversies

Seminary presidents, like other mortals, have sometimes found their cups running over with controversies and conflict. Some presidents have had to contend with denominational-wide conflicts over theology or ethnic identity and loyalty. Other presidents have had to struggle with controversies bubbling up out of heated debates in American social and cultural history—race, gender, and Vietnam, for example. Still other presidents have had to face internal pressures and power struggles in a seminary's life when tensions have built, tempers have grown short, and personal animosities have erupted in open conflict. Few presidents have been free from such controversies. Most presidents have survived them. Some have delighted in the battles, but others have been deeply wounded and badly scarred. This chapter explores three broad categories of controversies that seminary presidents have faced—doctrinal, cultural, and administrative—and the ways in which presidents have sought to deal with them.

Doctrinal Controversies

Theological seminaries, by their nature as educational institutions of the church, have been important bearers of tradition for American Protestantism. Because the seminaries have had primary responsibility for the preparation of rising generations of ministers and church leaders, the orthodoxy of the seminaries has frequently been a concern for Protestant churches. A seminary's faithfulness in transmitting a particular tradition has often been suspect, and over the years many a young seminarian has been told by those back home: "Don't let the seminary take away your faith."

When a theological controversy has broken over a church, seminaries have frequently been at the center of the storm. Moreover, seminary presidents have often been lightning rods atop their institutions, exposed in the midst of the turbulence, a ready target for a thunderbolt. When such storms strike, presidents spend much of their time trying to protect their institutions from damaging charges. Sometimes, however, a storm provides an opportunity for change at a seminary, and a president can use the disorders of the moment to restructure an institution's life. Such was the case at Princeton Theological Seminary in the 1920s. Only then it was not the church's concern for Princeton's orthodoxy but Princeton's concern for the orthodoxy of the church that caused the storm of controversy.

The “Princeton theology,” expounded by Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield, had won in the 19th century “acceptance far and wide as the strength and stay of embattled conservatism.”¹ This Old School Presbyterian orthodoxy was highly rationalistic, serious in its engagement with modern thought, and closely linked with politically moderate and socially affluent circles.² In the closing decades of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th, however, Princeton theology began to provide the intellectual foundation for an emerging fundamentalism.³

Alongside this “Princeton theology” was a polity that placed Princeton under the direct control of the “Northern Presbyterian” General Assembly. The theology and polity were not in conflict during the 19th century, but during the early decades of the 20th they began to clash as a “broadening church” began to move away from Princeton’s embattled conservatism.⁴ The election in 1913 of Princeton’s second president, J. Ross Stevenson, was regarded by many as an attempt by the school’s directors to bring Princeton into closer touch with the life of the church and a larger theological world.⁵

Stevenson faced a faculty divided into two camps. The larger camp represented a continuation of Old School orthodoxy, narrowed and squeezed by the forces of the modern world. J. Gresham Machen was its most persuasive voice. The smaller camp, with Stevenson as its leader, represented a more moderate conservatism and a more tolerant attitude toward theological diversity. The clash between the two camps came into the open in the 1920s when Machen was nominated to move from his New Testament position to a chair of apologetics and ethics. Stevenson carried the fight to the General Assembly, which had to give final approval to the nomination. Speaking to the Assembly, Stevenson characterized the divisions in the Princeton faculty by saying that: “There are honored men on this platform who could not be invited to the Princeton Theological Seminary because of the line of demarcation drawn by those who believe the time has come to make the differences clear.... This election [of Machen], I say, is involved in that situation.”⁶

In response, the assembly postponed the election of Machen and appointed a committee to visit the seminary and report to the next General Assembly. When the committee arrived on the campus, Stevenson put the question sharply: “Shall Princeton Seminary now, fretted by the interference of the General Assembly, in rebellion against the Presbyterian Church as at present organized and controlled...be permitted to swing off to the extreme right wing so as to become an interdenominational Seminary for Bible School-premillennial-session fundamentalism?”⁷ The eventual result was the reorganization of Princeton with changes in its charter

and plan. The two boards of the seminary—a board of directors and a board of trustees—were reduced to one with increased authority, and the office and powers of the president were more carefully defined and enlarged. Stevenson had clearly not only won the day but had also managed to strengthen significantly the power and authority of the seminary president at Princeton.

Machen left Princeton and, with the help of others in his camp, was instrumental in the establishment of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. In 1936 Machen was suspended from “the office of a minister in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America” over a related matter of an independent mission board. The controversy at Princeton, together with the controversy surrounding the independent mission board, “graphically illustrates,” wrote Professor Lefferts Loetscher in *The Broadening Church*, “the way in which the Church was moving simultaneously toward administrative centralization and theological decentralization.”⁸

The movement toward “administrative centralization,” which was so intimately related to changes in American culture and the rise of the seminary presidency, could lead in other directions when it was linked not to “theological decentralization” but to a kind of theological centralization, a narrowing of theological boundaries for a denomination and its seminaries. This movement and the consequent controversies for seminary presidents can be seen most clearly in the struggles surrounding Concordia Seminary in the 1970s and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the 1980s and 1990s.

Concordia in Saint Louis had been since the middle of the 19th century near the heart of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. Under the leadership of Carl F. W. Walther, who served as president both of Concordia and of the Missouri Synod, the seminary had become a bastion of Lutheran orthodoxy and the attempt to maintain a distinct German culture in the Midwest.⁹ An aggressive policy of recruitment of German immigrants and an extensive German parochial school system that taught both Lutheran orthodoxy and German culture marked the Missouri Synod. The result was a church “aloof from the mainstream of American life” but “theologically informed, homogeneous, [and] dynamic.”¹⁰

Following World War I, change began to break into the church’s life—the flow of German immigrants stopped, the use of German in parochial schools and worship declined, and acculturation to dominant patterns of American life and thought were well under way. This process was accelerated by World War II, and by the 1950s and 1960s the synod and Concordia had become more engaged by the larger world of American religious and cultural life. These changes alarmed

conservatives in the synod. By the late 1960s, with the rising conservative tides against the traumas of the decade, conservatives were able to take control of the Synod. The conflicts that followed were focused around a former seminary president and the current president of Concordia.¹¹

In May 1969, John H. Tietjen was elected president of Concordia. Tietjen was, in his words, "an Easterner, born and raised in New York City," who since his graduation from Concordia had served parishes in New York. "The East Coast," said Tietjen, "was a fringe area for the Missouri Synod and had a mind-set often out of touch with the Midwest, where the [synod] members predominated."¹² Two months after Tietjen's election, Jacob A. O. Preus, president of the small and conservative seminary of the synod in Springfield, Illinois, was elected president of the synod by a well-organized and politically astute conservative party. Preus soon showed himself to be determined to change the direction of Concordia, rid it of Tietjen and "liberal" professors, and install a faculty loyal to the conservatives' orthodoxy. In the summer of 1973, the Preus forces secured a majority on the seminary's board. In February 1974, the board suspended Tietjen for alleged malfeasance, advocacy of false doctrine, failure to discipline faculty members, and defiance of Preus and synod officials. Preus's brother Robert was made vice president for academic affairs. Most of the faculty and students left with Tietjen, forming Concordia Seminary in Exile, or "Seminex." It eventually joined with seminaries that were a part of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.¹³

The strategy of Missouri Synod conservatives had been to mount an unprecedented political campaign to secure the denominational leadership. Once that leadership was secured, its offices were quickly used to gain control of the seminary board. The failure of Tietjen and other moderates, in spite of their best efforts, to block this juggernaut was an indication of the growing power of conservative forces in American life. Reacting against a complex array of cultural changes that were reshaping the North American landscape, conservatives were using sharply drawn definitions of orthodoxy to gain control of key institutions for the transmissions of their values and world-view. Particularly critical in this strategy were definitions of biblical infallibility and inerrancy. This same strategy soon proved equally successful in the Southern Baptist Convention.

In 1984, at the opening convocation of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, the seminary's president Roy L. Honeycutt declared "holy war" on what he called "unholy forces which, if left unchecked, will destroy essential qualities of both our convention and this seminary."¹⁴

Honeycutt's charges were aimed at "independent fundamentalists" who were then in the sixth year of their announced 10-year strategy for taking over the Southern Baptist Convention and its institutions. That strategy, said to have been developed by fundamentalist Harold Lindsell who boasted that he had helped purge the Missouri Synod, was built around the election of fundamentalists to the convention presidency for 10 successive years.¹⁵ Through the appointive power of the president, every agency and institution of the convention could be controlled by the fundamentalists within 10 years if fundamentalists won 10 successive presidencies and these presidents followed the strategy of appointing only those in their camp. By the spring of 1990, the fundamentalists had gained control of Southern Baptist Seminary's board, and after a long fight, Honeycutt announced in the fall of 1992 that he was resigning at the end of 1993.¹⁶ Six years before Honeycutt had lost his "holy war," W. Randolph Lolley, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, had resigned under pressure from the newly gained majority of fundamentalists on Southeastern's board.¹⁷

The presidents of the Southern Baptist seminaries were working within a church polity that made the seminaries particularly vulnerable to a well-coordinated assault. The free church tradition, of which the Baptists were so intimately a part, emphasized the autonomy of the local congregation and the advisory character of church councils. Denominational leaders were said to possess no authoritative power. Yet the actual structures of the Southern Baptist Convention had evolved in a contradictory manner that allowed the accumulation of essentially unchecked power in the hands of the president of the convention.¹⁸ Moreover, the composition of the annual convention invited a mobilization of political forces. "Messengers" and not representatives constituted the convention, with congregations that contributed \$2,500 or more to the convention having the right to send up to 10 messengers. In theory this meant by the 1980s that as many as 378,000 messengers could be admitted to a convention. As late as 1979, however, the average number of messengers was under 15,000, but during the 1980s the numbers soared to as many as 45,000. A well-financed and well-coordinated effort by dedicated fundamentalists to "get out the messengers" won the presidency of the convention.¹⁹ With no real checks on the convention president's powers to appoint seminary trustees, "holy wars" of seminary presidents became lost wars.

A similar, if not exactly parallel, situation in the Missouri Synod also set the context for the Concordia conflict—a tradition of strong congregational autonomy linked with impressive, and largely unchecked, power lodged in the synod

presidency. For both the Missouri Synod and the Southern Baptists, the linking of centralized administrative authority with a “centralizing” or narrowing of theological positions overwhelmed seminary presidents’ attempts to protect their institutions from “hostile take-overs.”²⁰

Cultural Conflicts

In a nation of immigrants and ethnic pluralism, churches have played an important role as conservators of various cultural identities.²¹ Among Roman Catholics, parishes and their immigrant aid societies helped to receive the waves of new immigrants who arrived in the United States between the Civil War and World War I. In New York and Chicago, in Philadelphia, Saint Louis, and a host of other cities, parishes became centers of immigrant life, seeking not only to recreate in the New World a life as it had been known in the Old but also to help the immigrants adjust to the strange ways of America.

Among Protestants, denominations with distinct ethnic identities were organized as ways of maintaining religious and ethnic communities. For these denominations, their seminaries became central battlegrounds around the question of “Americanization.” The issues at stake in “Americanization” appeared to be both doctrinal orthodoxy and ethnic identity, a conflict of cultures involving language, religious belief, and patterns of life. The 19th-century Dutch immigration, for example, with major settlements around Grand Rapids and Holland, Michigan, has continued for most of the 20th century as a “conservative subculture” lodged primarily in the Christian Reformed Church. This denomination’s seminary, Calvin Theological Seminary, has been the scene of fierce controversies surrounding “Americanization” and the intrusion of “progressive” thought into this Dutch enclave. In 1952 virtually the entire faculty was dismissed by the synod in an attempt to break the impasse between “progressives” and “traditionalists.”²²

Lutherans have been particularly troubled by questions of “Americanization.” Lutheran churches were frequently organized in the 19th century around ethnic identity—Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish Lutherans, Danish and German Lutherans, each organizing their own churches, speaking their own languages, and dividing over their own theological controversies. The seminaries they founded were battlegrounds between those who sought to “Americanize” and those who insisted that correct theology could only be uttered in German or in another “mother tongue.” The exceedingly complex story of Lutheran theological education in Ohio, for example, was marked by the struggles between the

“Americanizers” and traditionalists. The “Americanizers” were influenced by the Reformed and evangelical substratum of American piety and were largely located in a nongeographical “English District.” The traditionalists, or “Old Lutherans,” were composed primarily of German-speaking immigrants who rejected any modification of the Augsburg Confession. The Lutheran seminary at Wittenberg University was the theological seminary of the “Americanizers” while the one at Capital University was the seminary of the “Old Lutherans.”²³

Presidents of these largely ethnic seminaries have had to negotiate between loyalty to inherited cultural traditions and the unrelenting forces of acculturation to an American context. The experience of Samuel D. Press, president of Eden Theological Seminary from 1925 to 1941, illustrates the resulting controversies some presidents have had to face. Eden was the seminary of the German Evangelical Synod of North America, an irenic and nonsectarian denomination whose roots were in German efforts to unite Lutheran and Reformed churches. When Press became president of Eden in 1925, the seminary was seeking to “maintain both fidelity to German ethnicity and relevance to its American context.” Press was himself “completely a son of the synod, committed to its traditions and fervent in its faith.” His “faith and loyalty were beyond question.” Yet he was also a “man of change.”²⁴ Together with H. Richard Niebuhr, dean of the Eden faculty in the late 1920s and early 1930s, he faced challenges from two faculty members who were alarmed by the changes at Eden. The faculty members insisted that the issues were theological and that they involved the abandonment of a pietistic-Lutheran stance for “a modern accommodation of Anglo-American theology in the seminary.” “It is interesting to observe,” wrote Walter Brueggemann in his history of Eden, “how much the issues are understood to be related to the abandonment of Germanness and the embrace of or seduction by (depending on one’s view) American values and norms.” Niebuhr, for example, was regarded as a leader of this “Anglo-American direction” precisely because he was “second generation in America.” Press and Niebuhr carried the day and the two faculty members were eventually dismissed, setting Eden clearly “on a course of American ecumenism and a vigorous rejection of any doctrinal or sectarian narrowness.”²⁵

Of course seminaries emerging out of immigrant communities have not been the only ones that have faced tensions and controversies in their relationship to American culture. White Southern seminaries in particular went through long and continuing controversies around questions of race. J. McDowell Richards, president from 1932-1971 of Columbia Theological Seminary in suburban At-

lanta, contended with the “race issue” throughout his long tenure. A self-described “son of the Old South,” Richards struggled with his own racial assumptions as he sought to lead Columbia and the Southern Presbyterian Church out of the “Old South” into the “New.” His sermons calling for racial justice were denounced by conservatives, and when he wrote the “Atlanta Ministers’ Manifesto” against school segregation in Georgia, he alienated many in the seminary’s constituency. He eventually saw part of that constituency leave to form the Presbyterian Church in America.²⁶

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, seminary presidents faced the upheavals rocking American society. Clark Kerr and Marian L. Gade have described these “bad times” for college and university presidents:

Never before in American history had higher education gone from a location so high on the mountain to a place so low in the valley, and so quickly. No time was ever better for the university and college president than the late 1950s and early 1960s, and no time was ever worse than the late 1960s and early 1970s. The best of times became the worst of times in almost no time at all. The planners and the builders and the innovators gave way to the managers and the survivors and the scapegoats within the span of half a decade.²⁷

John C. Bennett was president of Union (NY), during the particularly tumultuous years of 1968-1969. Vietnam, the rising voice of the Black Power movement, and the demands of student rights confronted Bennett. In the spring of 1969, following James Forman’s *The Black Manifesto*, students took over Union’s administration building. A series of compromises followed that led to Union’s contributing to a variety of causes intended to support the struggles of African Americans for justice and to the establishment of a new system of governance that included significant student involvement. In later years, Bennett reflected on his role in the events of 1968 and 1969:

I’m sure if I had been Henry Pitney Van Dusen I would have laid the law down, but I’m not sure what would have happened. I think you would have had a situation that was so brittle that things would have broken. I don’t know. At any rate, I tried to moderate the process at each stage. I had some sympathy with it; I had some sympathy with the emphasis on student power at that time, more than I would have now, I would think.... Yet, at the time I felt that we didn’t do anything that could have been avoided.²⁸

Reinhold Niebuhr later noted that Bennett possessed “unpolemical wisdom,” and a former student said of him that he was a “model of concerned and yet objectively fair judgment, a man with a passion for justice tempered with a gentle decency.”²⁹ Bennett’s ability to maintain his own integrity while negotiating between competing groups and claims was a challenge that many seminary presidents have faced in less dramatic situations. Indeed, seminary presidents have often found themselves in the middle of competing theological perspectives and ideologies, between faculty and constituencies, and between faculty members at war with one another.³⁰ The task of finding prudent compromises, of discovering some middle way between “extremes,” of restoring some harmony to a divided seminary community has been one of the most frequent and demanding responsibilities of seminary presidents. The character of the office, with its need for administrative harmony and with the pressing demands of fundraising, encourages the role of president as mediator and peacemaker. Both the times of a presidency and the personality of a president help to shape the way a president seeks to fulfill this role—some have been “strong leaders” and authoritarian, using the force of their personalities and the power of their office to settle matters. Others, such as Bennett, have relied more on the persuasive power of modesty, decency, and good humor to bring reconciliation and to restore some semblance of harmony.

Administrative Conflicts

Presidents have not only been peacemakers and mediators but have on occasion been the cause of controversy and conflict, particularly in regard to their administrative styles and decisions. One perennial issue has been how much time they should spend on the campus and how much time they should be out raising funds and encouraging the support of various constituencies. Faculties frequently do not want presidents too involved in the educational programs of their seminaries, but neither do they want them away so much that the presidents are virtual strangers to the campus and to its concerns. Finding the right balance between time on campus and time off campus has apparently become an increasing problem for seminary presidents as the demands for fundraising have grown. But it is not a new problem. Charles Nash resigned in 1921 from Pacific School of Religion because he felt he needed to be “out in the field in the churches,” while others thought he needed to spend more time on the campus.³¹

Decisions about the location of a campus and about the construction—or destruction—of buildings have often been the cause of intense controversies. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr., president of Chicago Theological Seminary, ran into a fire-storm of protest in 1956 when he announced that the seminary would tear down a deteriorating Frank Lloyd Wright building in order to make way for a much-needed dormitory.³² While an agreement to sell the building settled this controversy, other presidents have had to face long struggles over the location of entire campuses. Frequently surrounding the question of such a move have been competing images of the city and the relationship of theological education to other forms of higher education. Should a seminary stay in a small town or rural location as a way of protecting students from urban vices, or should a seminary be located in the heart of a metropolis, facing the challenges and opportunities of modern civilization, perhaps adjacent to a university? These questions, which were asked most frequently in the closing years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th, evoked conflicting responses as Protestant America struggled with the realities of a rising urban society and the nature of theological education. Most seminary presidents have supported such moves, and not a few of them have given themselves to the task—often in the face of substantial opposition—of leaving behind an old campus and building a new one. Walter W. Moore, for example, led Union Seminary in Virginia out of the Virginia countryside, seven miles from the little hamlet of Farmville, to a new campus in Richmond. He had to overcome not only the opposition to the move but the controversy surrounding the choice of a location in Richmond.³³ Lester Allen Welliver, on the other hand, opposed the move of Wesley from its location in western Maryland to Washington, DC, next to American University. Welliver faced the formidable opposition of Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, who was insistent that the seminary move. Shortly after the decision was made to move the seminary, Welliver resigned.³⁴

The opposition Welliver faced with Bishop Oxnam illustrates one source of competing power that a president confronts in a controversy—an influential board member, especially the chair of the board. Other potential sources of influential opposition have been senior faculty, leaders of the alumni/ae association, student leaders, an entrenched vice president, or, as we have seen, a church leader such as a synod or convention president. A variety of factors have shaped how presidents have faced such opposition and the conflicts that strike seminary campuses—a president's personality and "habits of heart," institutional traditions, the ethos of a denomination or geographical region, and strategies of "conflict management" that are widely practiced and encouraged during a particular historical period.

Whatever strategies they have adopted when their seminaries have been embroiled in controversies, 20th-century presidents have spent much of their time putting out fires and attempting to protect their institutions from disruptive forces. During earlier periods, when the seminary presidency carried with it more authority, presidents had more resources for successfully addressing controversies. Since the 1960s, however, presidents have possessed less power to protect the long-term interests of their institutions from outside incursions or divisive power struggles within the seminaries. Under these circumstances, what appears to be a critical task for a president is securing *adequate checks and balances of power* within an institution's life. The ways in which a seminary is related to the church and to various, and sometimes competing, constituencies of a denomination; the manner in which trustees are elected; the internal governance of the seminary; and the creation of a cooperative mood within the seminary are all matters of great importance for contemporary seminary presidents. Without the authority or influence of their predecessors, today's presidents are faced with the task of seeking ways to counter special interest groups and nurturing a renewed sense of mutual dependence and cooperation between church and seminary.

ENDNOTES

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9. See Ahlstrom, 757-58.

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20. See Frederick A. Norwood, *From Dawn to Midday at Garrett* (Evanston, IL: Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 1978), 61-62. For doctrinal conflict within an independent seminary, see George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), esp. 147-52.
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“Lord High Everything Else”: The Many Functions of the Seminary President

George L. Blackman, in describing the leadership style of the founder of Gambier Theological Seminary, said that Philander Chase served “like Pooh-Bah in *The Mikado*” as “Lord High Everything Else.”¹ During much of the 20th century, seminary presidents have frequently found themselves in such “lordly” positions. In reviewing the letter-file boxes of President Hugh Latimer Elderdice of Westminster Seminary (Maryland), Douglas Chandler found:

office memos, book orders, and appointments; student inquiries, applications, admissions, and rejections; requests from married students for housing and jobs for their wives; letters official, personal, and sometimes “confidential”; orders for coal, repairs, furniture, fertilizer, and building supplies; disputes over bills for electricity and plumbing; faculty selection, remuneration, and teaching duties; reports to and from the Board of Governors; scholarship bequests and disbursements; notes on contributions from alumni, friends, and churches, and a hundred other things.

In addition to being president, Elderdice was also “registrar, director of admissions, chief fundraiser, recruitment agent, bookkeeper, treasurer, superintendent of buildings and grounds, director of counseling, and field work supervisor.” On occasion, when the need arose, he served as professor of Hebrew, historical theology, or practical theology. Sometimes he found himself as the seminary janitor. In all these different capacities, wrote Chandler, “he placed the stamp of his own character indelibly on the institution he did so much to save.”²

Earlier chapters have noted a variety of these functions of the seminary president. What is needed now is to draw together the many functions of the presidents into one evolving picture, to point to some important tasks not yet discussed in any detail, and to explore the relationship of these many functions to changing institutional and social contexts.

The President as Educator

A study of “Chief Executives of Theological Schools: A Profile” found that of the 174 “chief executives” surveyed in 1991, half did not report any time in classroom teaching. The 50 percent that did teach spent an average of 20 percent of their time in teaching—an average estimated to represent one course a year.³ While this study included both Roman Catholic schools and university-related divinity schools, it does point to the long-term development in the seminary presidency outlined earlier in this volume. What is important to note here, however, is the continuing pressure for presidents to remain involved in classroom teaching, even as the office of president has moved increasingly toward a preoccupation with administration and fundraising. Many presidents have evidently felt, in addition to their own interests in teaching, a need to be in the classroom as a way of keeping in touch with students and engaging a faculty on its own turf.⁴ Isolation from the classroom makes it more difficult for a president to know students and to understand the ethos of a faculty and the specific concerns of students and faculty. So the pressure has remained for presidents to teach, even as they have less and less time to teach in the classroom.

What is often not recognized, however, even by the presidents themselves, is the teaching role of presidents in arenas other than the classroom. When presidents address boards about issues in theological education, when they report to faculties about issues in the church, and when they talk to student convocations about seminary policy, they are engaged in teaching. Even some mundane administrative tasks—seeing that the “light bill” is paid or reviewing architectural plans for a new classroom building—fall under what David Kelsey has called the “concreteness” of the educational process.⁵

In addition to the pressures “to keep in touch with the classroom,” presidents have been expected to have some scholarly interests. If earlier presidents were often published scholars who pursued technical scholarly matters, later presidents have been increasingly expected to have some scholarly background.⁶ Moreover, presidents beset with growing administrative and fundraising responsibilities have continued to need at least a nodding acquaintance with developments in the various theological disciplines. To be engaged with faculty around the important questions that have confronted theological education in the 20th century has meant that presidents have needed to be well read in social and cultural history. The intellectual challenges that confronted presidents at Concordia and Southern Baptist during the controversies of the 1970s and 1980s illustrate, in a forceful if

narrowly focused manner, the ways in which presidents have had to grapple with broad intellectual and cultural issues.

Presidents have influenced the educational programs of their seminaries primarily through their administrative work rather than through any classroom teaching they may have done from time to time. In particular, presidents have helped shape the educational ethos of their institutions through their vision about the nature and purpose of theological education, through the selection of new faculty, and through their influence on the content and pattern of changing curricula. Three examples, representing different times and places, illustrate this aspect of presidential responsibilities.

In his 1918 inaugural address as the new president of Union in New York, Arthur C. McGiffert, Sr., insisted that “the spirit of independent scientific investigation can govern theological study as it never could before,” and he encouraged students to come to Union to study religion regardless of their vocational interests.⁷ Under McGiffert’s leadership, a shift in the educational direction of Union began to take place. The earlier model of the seminary as the place for the preparation of pastoral theologians was being broadened, if not replaced, by the image of the seminary as an institution for the scientific study of religion and the training of professional specialists. Such an understanding of the seminary’s purpose was strengthened by faculty appointments during McGiffert’s tenure, by changes in the curriculum—a four-year course of study for the B.D. degree was tried—and by the “radical step” of levying tuition charges for theological students.⁸

During his tenure as president of Eden Theological Seminary, 1925-41, Samuel D. Press oversaw important curricular developments. These developments reflected both the broad ecumenical spirit of Press and the conviction “that theological education is not and cannot be learning doctrines and data, but is a dialogic process with the needs and values of the culture in which the church must live.”⁹ Press himself “understood rather clearly that theological education was primarily an enculturation into a mood and heart-set (not to say mind-set), which was not so preoccupied with formal learning as with character formation.”¹⁰

Half a century after McGiffert’s inauguration, William T. Ingram, Jr., president of Memphis Theological Seminary, wrote that the “president of the seminary ought to be actively engaged in curriculum development without controlling it.” Ingram called for “reducing the number of required hours” and for “making the curriculum much more flexible than it had been in the past.” The resulting flexibility “enabled courses that were relevant to the challenges of the time to be a part of the curriculum.”¹¹

These examples point to the role of the president in setting an educational ethos and in shaping the educational program of a seminary. While faculties generally have had primary responsibility for curricular matters, they have addressed those responsibilities within the context of educational goals and values significantly influenced by presidential visions and commitments. If in recent years presidents have had less time to give to classroom teaching, the careful articulation of an educational vision and the shaping of an institutional ethos remain among the most important tasks of the seminary president. These tasks are a part of the teaching function, broadly conceived, that have long marked presidential responsibilities. Such teaching in all its concreteness calls for more recognition and for exploration of its implications. We shall return to this teaching function of the president in the final chapter.

Preaching and Public Relations

While presidents have felt pressure to be in the classroom and engaged with the educational programs of their schools, many have also found they have needed to be regularly in the pulpit. Presidents who have come from the pastorate have often been well-known preachers. When, for example, Joseph Sizoo came to New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1947, he was regarded as one of the “princes of the American pulpit.”¹² Not surprisingly, when seminaries have sought pastors for their presidents, they have generally turned to outstanding preachers. Such choices have appeared wise not only because the preacher is well known but also because one important task of the president has involved speaking before large groups. Earlier generations of presidents had many speaking and preaching responsibilities, but more recently, as travel has become easier, those responsibilities appear to have increased significantly. By the mid-1980s, it was not unusual for a seminary president to be preaching in a different church almost every Sunday. “During my pastoral ministry,” one contemporary president has written:

I developed skills as a preacher, speaker, and motivator. I find those skills essential to my role as president of a seminary. As president, I am responsible for developing constituency relationships and spend a great deal of my time in fund raising. I am invited to preach in congregations almost every Sunday and am frequently invited to speak to presbyteries and other gatherings of laity and clergy. Our capital campaign has required that I be able to speak to groups of people, articulating a vision for [the seminary] and a compelling case for their support. The ability to

communicate clearly and with passion has been a major asset to my role as president.¹³

Such a schedule has placed heavy demands on the president's time, even for those presidents who, having come from the pastorate, have had a large "barrel of sermons" ready for use. Certainly the demands on the president's family, with regular travel on weekends, have been substantial.¹⁴

Closely related to presidents' preaching and other public speaking schedules have been their efforts in "public relations." However much presidents have felt called to preach the gospel, their preaching schedules have reflected the need to do that preaching largely among the constituencies of their seminaries, as the above quote makes clear. Such preaching schedules have allowed presidents to be in contact with local congregations, to visit with pastors, to recruit students, and to nurture relationships with possible donors. The busy preaching schedules of many seminary presidents, in other words, have not only addressed the specific purposes of worship and preaching but have also provided important opportunities for presidents to "tell the story" of their seminaries. Because the seminaries are largely regarded as institutions of the church, preparing future leaders of the church, the linking of preaching opportunities with the promotion of the seminaries apparently has not appeared any more incongruous than missionaries, home on furlough, promoting missions in their preaching.

Builder of Buildings

Among the many functions of the presidents, few have been more visible than that of "builder of buildings." For some presidents, this function has involved building entire campuses. For others, building programs have meant expansions and renovations of established campuses. But in any case, when presidents have turned to buildings, much of their energy and attention has turned that way as well.

Twentieth-century presidents who have faced the task of building a new campus have most often been involved in moving an established seminary to a new location. The experience of Richard T. Gillespie illuminates what other presidents have faced with the building of a new campus. Gillespie was elected president of Columbia Theological Seminary in 1925. Before he accepted the office, however, he insisted that the question of the seminary's location be settled—should the seminary remain in Columbia, South Carolina, where it had been for over 90 years,

or should it move to Atlanta, the “center of the New South”? Once the decision was made to move, Gillespie was confronted with the tasks both of raising the money for the move and of overseeing the construction of the new campus. For the next few years he essentially functioned as the “general contractor” for the construction of the new campus, often while traveling far and wide soliciting funds. Five years later, he was dead at age 51. “He literally poured out his life for the new Columbia Seminary,” said the seminary’s historian.¹⁵ Other early 20th-century presidents “gave their lives” or “had their lives shortened” by similar tasks.¹⁶ But some presidents have thrived under the pressures of construction and fundraising, delighting in watching a new campus being built. “It is impossible to describe,” wrote President Harry V. Richardson of the new Interdenominational Theological Center campus, “the joy we felt as we saw the site gradually taking shape and the bounds of the buildings being staked out.”¹⁷

Intimately linked with the location and the architecture of any new campus has been the seminary president’s vision of the nature and purpose of theological education. Can theological education and the preparation of persons for ministry best take place in a rural, urban, or suburban setting? Should a seminary be next to a university or only nearby? Should the architecture be Collegiate Gothic, Victorian, or Modern? “If I had to say,” Sir Kenneth Clark once declared, “which was telling the truth about society, a speech by a Minister of Housing or the actual buildings put up in his time, I should believe the buildings.”¹⁸ The building of buildings, in other words, has not only been one of the many functions of seminary presidents in the 20th century but has also provided one of the most important windows into the values and assumptions of those presidents.

What a president believes about the purpose and character of theological education, about its relationship to church and to society, is revealed in the choices made in building buildings and in furnishing them.¹⁹ For if others have been involved with presidents in making such choices (and presidents have not infrequently made them alone), presidents have often made the final decisions in regard to buildings.

Where is the president’s office? Where are the faculty offices? Where is the chapel? The development office? Where do students live? How are classrooms designed? What is the location of the library? The answers given to such questions say much about the political and cultural geography of a campus, pedagogical presuppositions, and the conceptual framework that informs a president’s architectural decisions. A world as conceived by a president engaged in building

buildings and a world as lived in a particular place and sociohistorical setting come together in the buildings and the arrangements of a campus.

Moreover, the character of the buildings once they are built, their style, construction, and location, reveal much about an institutional context and the specific tasks that later presidents face. Well-maintained, imposing buildings and grounds, for example, of an affluent seminary speak volumes about the social location of the seminary and about the ethos in which a new president must address the many tasks on the presidential desk.

Builder of Programs

Some presidents have been known not so much as builders of buildings but as builders of programs. This has been especially true of presidents who have served since World War II and particularly of those presidents who have served since the 1960s and have led the great expansion of seminary programs that have taken place in recent years. Some of the programs have been degree programs that have made the “first professional degree” one among many offered by the seminaries. Other programs have had the character of an educational department, interdisciplinary in approach, and often drawing on diverse institutions for faculty and other resources. One of the early leaders in the development of such programs was Henry P. Van Dusen of Union in New York.

Van Dusen was committed to a vigorous expansion of Union’s program as a way of not only addressing the educational responsibilities to Union’s students but also of responding to specific needs of the church. In 1952 he presented to the faculty a proposal for a program in religious drama. The faculty approved the proposal on the condition that a grant be received to fund the program. When funding was secured, the program began with naming of professors, establishing a section in the catalog entitled “Christianity and the Arts,” and converting a room into a small theater.²⁰

Three years after he proposed the program in religious drama, Van Dusen oversaw the launching of the Program of Advanced Religious Studies, which brought to Union each year “approximately 25 promising younger leaders of the churches of the world, selected by the responsible officers of church bodies and Christian organizations.” The purpose of the program was “to prepare the participants to discharge their duties more effectively by having them study together the realities of the world’s moral and spiritual problems, the beliefs and practices of the principal non-Christian and secular faiths, and the role of

Christianity amid the changing world situation." The program was funded by a special grant for five years, and when the grant was not renewed, the program was "stretched out for ten years" by "exercising economies and picking up some other funds."²¹

In 1956, Van Dusen secured a grant for a five-year teaching experiment in psychiatry and religion. The goal of the program was "to explore and further the interrelations of psychiatry and theology at every degree level in the training of religious workers and teachers." By the time the original grant ended, the program had "proved its value and become a regular part of the curriculum."²²

In reviewing these and other programs begun by Van Dusen, Robert Handy noted in his history of Union that the "adding of special programs enriched the educational life of Union and added to its reputation, but those who made the decisions to add them unconsciously and unwittingly overextended the seminary's resources." When original grants were not renewed, the seminary "often found itself obligated morally if not always legally to faculty and staff members who had been added." Grants rarely added to the endowment and consequently did not provide a solid foundation for the continuation of worthy programs. "Though some suspected," wrote Handy, "that the seeds of later financial troubles were being planted, it was not until later that the dangers of financing special programs by grants rather than endowments became clear."²³

Whatever warning flags were raised by the Union experience, program development has been an important part of presidential work since the 1950s. Programs in continuing education, in mission and evangelism, in lay education and "globalization," in religion and the arts, in media and the church, in church and culture have spread across the seminary scene and have found their way to many a president's desk.²⁴ Some of these programs have emerged out of particular interests of presidents themselves and the needs they see in the church. At Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, for example, President John Mulder, a historian of American religion, secured in the mid-1980s a major grant from the Lilly Endowment for a program in religious history.²⁵ Sometimes, however, the proposal for a program has come to a seminary president from an outside funding source. Under such circumstances a president has to decide if a seminary has the resources to staff the proposal, if the proposal will be a distraction or a help in meeting a seminary's primary responsibilities, and if a faculty will give the proposal the necessary support needed for a successful program.²⁶

Whatever the origins of these various programs, a part of the routine work of the contemporary seminary presidency has increasingly become overseeing

program staff, reviewing and evaluating program reports, and constantly trying to raise funds to keep established programs going. In addition, presidents, for at least the last two decades, have faced the challenge of convincing faculties that the responsibilities of seminaries extend beyond the older degree programs, particularly the M.Div., and that many Protestant seminaries have now assumed, in part at least, the character of program agencies for the church.

The President as a Disciplinarian and Guardian of Morals

If the rising programmatic emphasis of the seminaries has demanded increasing amounts of contemporary presidents' time, earlier presidents often gave substantial amounts of their time and energy to the character formation of their students, to the inculcation of moral values, to the disciplining of students, and occasionally to the disciplining of faculty. At Concordia, for example, a strict code of conduct was established for students. By the 1920s, the code had 89 rules, including compulsory worship attendance and prohibitions against students engaging in "secular occupations" during the school year, singing "frivolous and improper songs," visiting "theaters, operas, and similar performances," and partaking in "sinful amusement."²⁷ When President John H. Tietjen was suspended in 1974 for alleged malfeasance, one of the charges against him was the failure to discipline faculty members.²⁸

Denominational polities and pieties have shaped the character of student discipline during much of the century. The decline of discipline in many churches and the replacement of discipline by referrals to professional therapists have provided an important context in which discipline in the seminaries has taken place.²⁹ More recently, state and national laws, governmental regulations, and the standards of accrediting agencies have influenced the procedures governing disciplinary matters.³⁰ In most seminaries, presidents have shared with faculty the discipline of students, with students having a right of final appeal to boards of trustees. Certainly when difficult disciplinary cases have arisen in regard to a student, they have demanded much of a president's time and attention: careful procedures must be followed, attention must be given to the consequences of discipline on the seminary community, and not infrequently much time must be given to explaining—in a discreet fashion—to concerned churches and pastors the causes and nature of the discipline.

The histories of Protestant seminaries contain few accounts of faculty members being disciplined on moral grounds.³¹ This does not mean, of course, that presidents and boards have not had to do so—only that such actions have not

frequently been a part of a public record told by a seminary historian. The memory of such discipline generally has been carried by oral traditions within an institution. Apparently discipline of faculty members has more recently been applied primarily through nonrenewal of contracts, negotiated resignations, and early retirements. Because such occasions can represent a crisis moment in an institution's life, they have no doubt been among the most difficult of presidential responsibilities.³²

The President as a Spiritual Leader of a Seminary

The many responsibilities of the president, described not only in this chapter but in earlier ones as well, come together and are finally focused on the role of the president as a spiritual leader. To be sure, this does not refer to some disembodied spirituality, but a spirituality that is incarnate in the ethos of an institution, in the ways in which a seminary is governed, in the character of personal relationships, and in the vision of the seminary's place in the providence of God. While a distinguished faculty member, or a cluster of faculty members, may provide significant spiritual leadership to a seminary, presidents by their very office and responsibilities inevitably shape much of the spiritual life on a campus.

The religious tradition within which a president stands obviously gives detail and tone to the piety that informs a president's spiritual leadership. Anglican piety, for example, and Southern Baptist piety have distinguishing features that have marked the leadership of the seminaries in these two traditions. Nevertheless, the point remains—presidents have not only been looked to for spiritual leadership, they have provided it through the decisions they make, the style of leadership they embody, and the sense of vocation they follow. Deeply internalized beliefs about God, the church, and the church's relationship to American culture emerge in the day-to-day details of a president's office. These beliefs unmistakably mark students, giving an institution an identifiable character.

At Fuller Theological Seminary, for example, the irenic evangelicalism of David Hubbard had a profound influence on the direction of the institution and the character of its graduates. The outlook of Fuller for several decades, wrote George Marsden, "was a reflection of David Hubbard's own background, experience, personality, and religious commitments." Through Hubbard a vision persisted that "Fuller Seminary should be a lighthouse on the hill, a model of Christian charity, piety, intellect, and practicality."³³ The broad evangelicalism

that was nurtured among Fuller's students during the years following Hubbard's election as president in 1963 was a tribute to the spiritual leadership of its president and to Hubbard's role as their teacher as he went about the day-to-day activities of his office.

The Coherence of the Office

What finally emerges from a review of the many functions of the seminary presidents is a picture of coherence. Presidents, rather than being confronted with many disparate functions, are engaged in a wide variety of activities that interact with one another in a reciprocal and dynamic fashion. The office of president has obviously been demanding and multifaceted, but it has been a vocation whose responsibilities have been unified around the task of creating and sustaining institutions of the church dedicated to the preparation and nurture of the ordained ministry. As such, the office of seminary president has been of enormous influence on 20th-century Protestantism in the United States.

Once this picture of coherence and influence has been acknowledged, however, another picture of the office must also be recognized. This picture, long lingering beneath images of coherence and influence, began to emerge most clearly during the 1960s, providing by the closing decade of the century an interpretation of the office and its history. We turn in the final chapter to this emerging picture and to the challenges it holds for the future of the office.

ENDNOTES

1. George L. Blackman, *Faith and Freedom: A Study of Theological Education and the Episcopal Theological School* (New York: Seabury Press, 1967), 60.
2. Douglas R. Chandler, ed. C. C. Goen, *Pilgrimage of Faith: A Centennial History of Wesley Theological Seminary, 1882-1982* (Washington, DC: Seven Locks Press, 1984), 59.
3. Barbara Wheeler, "Chief Executives of Theological Schools: A Profile," (Manuscript, Auburn Center, New York, 1993), 4.
4. Presidents with academic doctorates and with previous teaching experience appear to be growing in number. This background may provide for many of them an internal impulse toward the classroom that will likely be frustrated for most. Barbara Wheeler found in 1991, in her profile of "chief executives" of theological schools, that among younger "chief executives" 75 percent had academic doctorates, while among those over 55, only 60 percent had academic doctorates. *Ibid.*, 6.
5. David H. Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological About a Theological School* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), esp. 180-82, 254-63.
6. See Mark Allyn Holman, *Presidential Search in Theological Schools: Process Makes a Difference* (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, 1993), 5.

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7. Robert T. Handy, *A History of Union Theological Seminary in New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 155.
8. *Ibid.*, 144-57.
9. Walter Brueggemann, *Ethos & Ecumenism, An Evangelical Blend: A History of Eden Theological Seminary, 1925-1975* (Saint Louis: Eden Publishing House, 1975), 25.
10. *Ibid.*, 4.
11. William T. Ingram, Jr., ed., *A History of Memphis Theological Seminary of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 1852-1990* (Memphis: Memphis Theological Seminary Press, 1990), 142-43.
12. Howard G. Hageman, *Two Centuries Plus: The Story of New Brunswick Seminary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1984), 159. Holman found that "nearly half" of all new seminary presidents from 1989 to 1991 had served as a "senior priest/pastor in a local congregation." Mark Allyn Holman, "Study of the Seminary Presidency, Presidential Search and Selection Process: Overview of the Survey Data" (Manuscript prepared for the Lilly Endowment Study of the Seminary Presidency, 1993), 17, Graduate Theological Union Library, Berkeley, California.
13. Douglas W. Oldenburg, "Reflections of a Pastor/President" (Manuscript for the Lilly Endowment Study of the Seminary President, 1993), 4.
14. See *ibid.*, 5.
15. Louis C. LaMotte, *Colored Light: The Story of the Influence of Columbia Theological Seminary, 1826-1936* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1937), 218.
16. Francis Brown of Union (NY) is an example. See Handy, 138.
17. Harry V. Richardson, *Walk Together, Children: The Story of the Birth and Growth of the Interdenominational Theological Center* (Atlanta: ITC Press, 1981), 74.
18. Kenneth Clark, *Civilization: A Personal View* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 1.
19. The assumptions behind architectural arrangements are helpfully explored in Chandler, ed. Goen, 197-224.
20. Handy, 246-47.
21. *Ibid.*, 243, 246.
22. *Ibid.*, 248.
23. *Ibid.*, 248-49.
24. For the program expansion at Fuller under the leadership of David Hubbard, see George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 232-44.
25. The dean of the faculty and the librarian, who were intimately involved in the program, were also American church historians.
26. See Oldenburg, 12-13.
27. Carl S. Meyer, *From Log Cabin to Luther Tower: Concordia Seminary during 125 Years Toward a More Excellent Ministry, 1839-1964* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 220-21.
28. *Christianity Today*, February 15, 1974, 45.
29. The discipline, for example, that was frequently applied to church members by earlier generations of Protestants began to be replaced in the 20th century by a therapeutic world-view. A church member who was publicly intoxicated was no longer disciplined by a church but was quietly invited into the pastor's study for counseling or was referred to a professional counselor or social worker.

30. Recent regulations in regard to sexual harassment are perhaps the clearest example.
31. An early example of discipline, evoked by the passions of World War I, involved the dismissal of tenured professor Thomas C. Hall from Union (NY) because of his sympathies for Germany. See Handy, 340-42.
32. See Oldenburg, 9-10.
33. Marsden, 230-32.

Concluding Reflections

When John Knox McLean asked in 1900: "Should the theological seminary have a permanent president; and if so, what should be the powers and duties of the office?" he was anticipating a transformation that was about to take place in theological education. That transformation, as McLean saw it, would mean an end to older patterns of seminary governance through the creation of the office of seminary president "in the proper sense of the term." McLean believed that the only way seminaries could move into the modern world was under the direction of a professional manager, an executive whose work would be to "do things, not to tell about them." When he saw the future, McLean saw the seminaries of the land managed by executives who largely drew their inspiration from corporate America, often by way of college and university models of administration.¹

From the perspective of the late 20th century, McLean's vision of the new office has proved to be largely true. To be sure, religious traditions, the ethos of specific schools, the dynamics of specific historical periods, and the personality, style, and vision of individual presidents have all had their parts to play in shaping the office throughout the course of the century. But the world of the professional manager, with its own evolving values and styles, has increasingly dominated the ways in which the office has been understood. By the closing years of the century, the president as CEO has become a widely used and accepted metaphor for the office.²

If McLean saw the future with unusual clarity in 1900, the inadequacies of conceiving of the president as a professional manager—a CEO—have become clearer as the century's end draws near. Leon Pacala, for example, in his study of the presidency in the early 1990s, noted that "for substantial reasons, many find corporate models and language improper or inimical to the nature of theological schools." He added, "Whatever the reason, there appears to be a growing dysfunction of the appointment process used by theological schools in their search for leadership. The growing emphasis upon the executive functions of this leadership may worsen the problem. If so, there may well be a mounting leadership crisis facing theological education."³

What McLean's vision lacked, and what the presidency itself has largely lacked throughout the century, has been a coherent and compelling theological interpretation of the office. More precisely, the office has lacked a convincing metaphor that draws together into itself both the actual work of presidents and a

theological framework for interpreting and guiding that work. Even in those years when the presidency was most powerful, the office was vulnerable because the dominant metaphor for the office—the president-as-pastor—had shaky theological foundations.

During the early and middle years of the century, when the office was often filled by strong persons who were regarded (and who regarded themselves) as churchmen, the metaphor of the president as pastor was generally linked to a hierarchical administration and frequently to an authoritarian style. The president as pastor directed and guided a seminary, made decisions for a seminary community, led students and faculty in paths of righteousness, and recommended students to various fields of service. This metaphor, however well it may have served earlier presidents, has not been able to sustain itself for two primary reasons.

First, the metaphor has lacked, in spite of its biblical and theological imagery, strong theological foundations. The pastoral oversight practiced by presidents earlier in the century, with the concentration of governance in the hands of the president, meant that the president as pastor had much of the character of the president as bishop. And yet presidents were obviously not bishops in any episcopal succession with ecclesiastical and sacramental authority. Moreover, most presidents of Protestant seminaries were presidents within theological traditions that rejected the office of bishop as an order separate from the presbyterate.⁴ Without a foundation in church polities, with an accompanying theological interpretation of the office, the president as bishop has had little sustaining power, especially in the face of egalitarian and democratic ideologies of the late 20th century. By the closing decades of the century, few presidents had any “episcopal” authority in the manner of a Henry P. Van Dusen, Horace Greeley Smith, or J. McDowell Richards.

Second, the metaphor has become increasingly distant from the actual work of presidents. The growing complexity of theological institutions and the shifting roles of presidents described in this study have made the president-as-pastor metaphor appear largely nostalgic. The more recent attempts through therapeutic models of management to bridge the gap between the practice of presidents and the image of presidents as pastors have not been successful. The gap remains, and presidents continue to feel great tension between the work they have to do and the hopes engendered by the pastor metaphor.⁵

What is needed then for the future of the office is a new metaphor that can capture the imagination of presidents and of their many constituencies. Such a metaphor, if it is to be compelling, will need to provide a theological framework

for interpreting *and* guiding the office. And it will need, if it is to have any coherence, to be able to reflect the actual work presidents do and the social and historical contexts in which they find themselves.

A convincing metaphor, in other words, will not descend from the skies but will arise from the complex interaction of specific theological traditions and commitments with specific social and cultural realities. Without such a metaphor, contemporary and future presidents will likely face an increasing fragmentation of the office and a diminution of its authority as they move into the 21st century.

Reflection on the history of the presidency suggests in a modest way a new metaphor for the office—the president as a practical theologian. While the meaning of the term “practical theologian” is itself being vigorously debated, this unsettled character of the term provides opportunity for drawing into the discussions of practical theology the work of seminary presidents.⁶ It would allow presidents to enter the conversation not only with one another but also with a large community of scholars who are struggling with questions of theology and praxis.

As a practical theologian, a president would bring together in critical reflection specific theological traditions of the church with the practice of a specific part of the church’s life. As a practical theologian, a president could understand the office to be that of a teacher—not necessarily a teacher-scholar or a classroom teacher, but a teacher who demonstrates by the practice of the office ways to lead a Christian institution in the midst of a particular social and historical context. In this manner, all the work a president does would be understood to have a coherence around the task of teaching—how a president deals with finances and controversies; how a president relates to students, board, staff, and faculty; how a president handles schedules and family responsibilities; how a president speaks of the church and of congregational life; how a president leads worship, prays in public, and uses the Scripture; and how a president faces troubling issues of public welfare and personal ethics. In all of these and the other myriad responsibilities of the office, the president would be teaching, demonstrating in the practice of ministry a way to lead an institution of the church and to be faithful to the gospel.

What a president teaches would not be just any way to lead an institution of the church and to be faithful to the gospel but a way rooted in a particular community of faith. David Kelsey has argued that “the aim of theological education is to teach persons to be learned pastors, and the curriculum that does this best is one that concentrates on the communal identity of particular Christian churches,

what that identity is, how it is called into being, and how it is corrected and reformed.”⁷ A large part of a president’s teaching responsibility would necessarily be focused on communal identity—the character of that identity and the ways in which it provides resources for theological judgments in the practice of leadership. Such a responsibility would belong to presidents of interdenominational seminaries with significant ethnic and ecumenical diversity as well as to presidents of largely homogeneous denominational seminaries. Both types of seminaries stand within communities of faith with their traditions and commitments.

Twentieth-century presidents have not been unaware of this aspect of their office. Indeed, as we have seen, presidents earlier in the century were often regarded as an embodiment of particular theological and religious traditions. These presidents had internalized at some deep level the ethos, world-view, values, and commitments of a tradition. Future presidents, if they are to be practical theologians, will be engaged in a teaching, a mentoring, that nurtures a communal identity through the concrete practices of the office of president. The virtues required for those practices and the character of a president that those practices help to shape would provide much of what a president teaches.

Such teaching, of course, would not go on in an institutional vacuum but within the context of a society undergoing profound cultural transformations. Numbered among those transformations will likely be the continued restructuring of Protestantism that has marked much of the church’s life in the United States during the last few decades. Much of Protestantism in the 20th century has assumed the United States to be a hospitable place for the Christian faith and church. That assumption has largely informed the work of seminary presidents throughout the century, most particularly presidents of “mainline” Protestant seminaries. But the challenges to that assumption, especially the growing hostility to the faith that can be found in the media and in popular cultures, mean that the work of seminary presidents in the 21st century will be profoundly different from that of their predecessors.

If presidents of Protestant seminaries do begin to think of themselves in such a changed context as practical theologians, their teaching may very well have as a focus the development of practical wisdom for the mission of the church, or more clearly for the *Missio Dei*.

The president as practical theologian would thus interpret the office to be primarily a calling to nurture future leaders of the church for participation in the *Missio Dei*. Such a calling would mean that the teaching office of the president, in

all its various modes, would be about the creation of a Christian community of memory and hope that remembers and tells its constitutive narrative, confronts and seeks to transform the present age, and looks forward to the consummation of God's gracious activity in the world. In this way, a president as a practical theologian in a teaching office would be concerned with institutional ethos, the formation of personal character, and the cultivation within the seminary of certain habits of mind and heart.⁸

Such a concern would not be far from the concern of those who, at the beginning of the 19th century, conceived of and began to organize Protestant seminaries as instruments of the churches for meeting the mission challenge of a new century. They sought to meet this challenge through seminaries created to nurture the piety and intellect of future leaders of the church.⁹ As the 20th century draws to an end, the history of the seminary presidency and a mission challenge of a new century invite presidents to think of themselves as practical theologians and to consider their office one of the great teaching offices of the church.

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ENDNOTES

1. See the chapter on "The Office of President."
2. Leon Pacala's 1991 study confirms this development. "This survey confirms the extent to which the organization of theological schools is being influenced by patterns of corporate structures. Throughout the recent past, new offices have been established to perform specialized administrative and managerial functions, and the leadership exercised by these offices has been conceived according to such corporate patterns as chief executive officer, chief financial officer, chief academic officer, etc." Leon Pacala, "The Presidential Experience in Theological Education: A Study of Executive Leadership," *Theological Education* 29 (Autumn 1992): 11.
3. *Ibid.*, 11-12.
4. The United Methodist Church, for example, has bishops but not as an order separate from the presbyterate.
5. See Pacala, 27.
6. See, for example, the various definitions of practical theology given by authors of articles in Don S. Browning, David Polk, and Ian S. Evison, eds., *The Education of the Practical Theologian: Responses to Joseph Hough and John Cobb's "Christian Identity and Theological Education"* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), esp. 76, 85, 154, 169, and 187.
7. David H. Kelsey, "A Theological Curriculum About and Against the Church," in Joseph C. Hough, Jr., and Barbara G. Wheeler, eds., *Beyond Clericalism: The Congregation as a Focus for Theological Education* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 39.

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8. See Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983). For Farley, *theologia* is understood as a *habitus*, “a habit, an enduring orientation and dexterity of the soul.” See also David H. Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What’s Theological About a Theological School* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), esp. 124-29, 180-93, 227-63.

9. See Farley, 85-88; and Glenn T. Miller, *Piety and Intellect: The Aims and Purposes of Ante-Bellum Theological Education* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990).

