
Theological Education

L E A D E R S H I P

The Study of the Seminary Presidency
Reflections of Seminary Leaders

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Introduction

As part of the study of the seminary presidency, which I directed from 1992-1995, I made an effort to discover something about the origin and development of the office of president in theological institutions as we know it today. To this end, several historians were requested to produce histories of the office of the Catholic rector and the Protestant president from the early 1800s until the present.

An oral historian was also employed to interview a group of persons who had been presidents from the late 1940s until the early 1970s. Then, to complete the picture, we asked a group of about two dozen presidents, deans of university-related divinity schools, and rectors to reflect in writing their experiences of the office.

While I tried not to provide an outline, I did tell the writers that I was interested in how they became president, what they found upon entering the office, how they spent their time, what changed about the office during their tenure, what makes the work difficult and what aspects of the work they enjoy the most, and what they think about leaving the position. In sum, I wanted to learn all I could about presidents, from their entry into the office to their departure.

The writers were guaranteed anonymity so that they might write with frankness and openness; otherwise, I felt we might not get at the heart of the business of being a president of a theological institution.

I read each of these pieces several times and made copious notes. In addition, I asked Malcolm Warford, a long-time seminary president, to read them. Marian Gade, who has done research and writing about college and university presidents for many years, also read them. The reports of these two readers helped me digest the material and provided me with understanding that I have tried faithfully to incorporate into the book I have written about the seminary president.

From the beginning the presidents were told that some of their material might be published if the monies in the grant permitted. This has proven to be the case. Several of the presidents were requested to edit their memoirs, if they so desired, and to allow us to publish them. These pieces are included in this volume along with an introductory essay by Malcolm Warford.

One of the purposes of the study project was to strengthen the office of the president and thus strengthen the governance of theological schools. Because little has been written about what it is like and what it means to be a president

Introduction

of such institutions, another purpose was to provide information to current presidents and to candidates for the position. Most of all we wanted to assist trustees, members of the governing boards, with information that might enable trustees to make wise choices in selecting presidents as well as in supporting and strengthening the presidents now in office. To this end, we are making these memoirs available. The oral histories referred to above are available for future research in the libraries of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, and Union Theological Seminary in New York.

I speak for trustees, presidents, and candidates for the presidency when I express profound appreciation to all the presidents who wrote memoirs. I wish it had been possible to publish them all. To take time from a very busy schedule to reflect and write demonstrates a degree of dedication to the enterprise of theological education that we have come to expect in presidents and deeply appreciate.

We are not only indebted to Lilly Endowment for the funding of the study project on the office of the president, but also for making the publication of these materials possible. Craig Dykstra and Fred Hofheinz in particular are to be thanked for their helpful role in conceptualizing and nurturing the project to completion. James L. Waits and Nancy Merrill of the ATS staff have gone the second mile in assisting us with the publication of these documents.

Neely Dixon McCarter
President Emeritus
Pacific School of Religion

Work and Calling: An Interpretation of Presidents' Reflections on the Nature of Their Office

Malcolm L. Warford

Lexington Theological Seminary

"It has been a wonderful experience: hard, demanding, testing one's faith and strength. In the midst of it I found out who I am, for good or ill." —Vincent Cushing

"(The dean/president) . . . is an impermanent officer, a momentary steward into whose hands are entrusted for a specified time the leadership of the school." —Leander Keck

The reflections of the seminary leaders in this study vary greatly because of significant individual differences. However, there are some substantive generalizations that can be made on the recurring themes and common experiences that appear throughout these candid and often moving commentaries on the office of president or dean, in the case of the university-related divinity school. From my reading of their responses, I have isolated four dimensions of the president's work that emerge from the experience of the participants in this study of the seminary presidency.¹ These dimensions are managerial, relational, interpretive, and strategic.² Briefly, let me explain what I mean by these terms:

Managerial Dimension. This dimension involves comprehending how the school works, identifying the people who can manage daily operations, and putting into place systems of oversight and mutual accountability that express the institution's stated mission. Presidents have to be more than managers, but minimally they have to embody a level of administrative competence that engenders confidence among staff, faculty, and trustees, and keeps the school in balance and moving ahead.

Relational Dimension. The president's leadership in a theological school depends significantly on nurturing relationships both within and outside of the school. The ability to work within the interpersonal dynamics of a small institution requires highly developed personal and group skills, especially the grace to deal with conflict among competing ideologies and personalities. It

involves working with trustees and constituencies of support and accountability in the church, the academy, and the public community.

Interpretive Dimension. The president needs to be aware of the complexity of issues and understand them as more than happenstance problems. This means thinking in terms of systems and perceiving the changing nature of the context in which the seminary lives. It is the continuing effort to relate the seminary's history, mission, and ethos to the dynamic environment of the present moment. Moreover, it is the ability to live with this complexity and to tolerate a high level of ambiguity in recognition of the multiple levels of interpretation, cause, and effect, that converge in any one issue.

Strategic Dimension. Just as it is crucial to understand issues and context with interpretive insight, it is important that this ability be matched by a corresponding ability to develop a way of responding to issues and setting directions for the future. This means developing an anticipatory style that identifies compelling issues and trends. It involves establishing priorities, naming the questions that must be addressed, and evoking a sense of commitment to a future that can mobilize energy and support for this forward movement.

The Managerial Dimension

Almost all of the participants in the study indicated that they came to the position of president or dean with little or no prior administrative experience on a senior level. Everyone, it seems, came to the office with basic academic credentials, some with immediate pastoral experience, but few moved to the responsibilities of a chief executive officer with hands-on practice in senior administration, budgeting, or supervision. James E. Kirby (Perkins School of Theology) candidly admits, "My training for administration was strictly on the job, and, in the early years I flew by the seat of my pants."

"Why was I chosen?" Haddon Robinson (Denver Seminary) muses. "Academically, I possessed the 'union card' demanded for the position. I had a Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, an M.A. from Southern Methodist University, and the Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. I had taught homiletics at Dallas Seminary for nineteen years and for nine years was chairman of the department of pastoral ministry. None of this experience in academia, however, really prepared me to be a seminary president any more than running the hot dog concession at the ball park prepares someone to manage a football team."

He goes on to comment, "Before I accepted the appointment . . . I felt that I knew the institution and the problems I would face. I was wrong. Honest, well-

meaning people do not necessarily know the problems, or if they did, they may not tell what they know. They don't want to discourage a promising candidate from taking the position."

The day-to-day problems of boilers, budgets, and parking spaces were not uppermost on the minds of most of these presidents as they headed toward their first day of work. Most often the managerial demand presented itself in the form of financial problems that required immediate attention. The experience of Barbara Brown Zikmund (Hartford Seminary) was rather dramatic, but typical: "One hour before my first board of trustees meeting (October 1990) the bankers showed up in my office with the news that because of the lower earning power of the endowment, we should anticipate a sizable deficit." Douglass Lewis (Wesley Theological Seminary) remembers that when he received the auditors' report, it contained the ominous warning that the seminary was headed for closing if present financial practices continued much longer. This same experience was shared by others who recount their surprise at the actual fiscal condition of the schools they had agreed to serve. Vincent Cushing (Washington Theological Union) says with disarming frankness that "... I began to think that our board of trustees was merely an assemblage of religious personages who had hired me to run the place and not bother them with serious issues like finances."

While part of the new president's managerial surprises might have been the result of the search committee's lack of candor, more often than not they were caused by the president's lack of understanding that finances were so central to his or her responsibilities. This understanding, however, quickly emerges. James De Jong (Calvin Theological Seminary) suggests: "No one should accept the call unless he or she is willing to undertake that major responsibility [fundraising] and devote considerable time to the endeavor A rather sustained dimension of my work has been fundraising and advancement. Although responsibility for this was not included in my position description, I quickly concluded that if the school were to move forward on certain fronts, it would require resources unavailable to it in normal channels." And Mark Sisk (Seabury-Western Theological Seminary) frankly says, "There have been times I have felt, and do not like the feeling, that the whole financial well-being of the seminary rides solely on my all too spindly shoulders." This sense is echoed by Russell Dilday (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary): "Perhaps the most radical presidential adaptability is demanded in the task of maintaining fiscal responsibility at the seminary."

Compounding this fiscal issue was the complexity of the schools as organizations, i.e., the multiple and competing needs for adequate staffing, planning

and evaluation, building maintenance, and clear policy statements. James C. Fenhagen (General Theological Seminary) tells us that, "If I were to begin again as a seminary president, or as the head of any institution for that matter, I would pay close attention to such details as clear policy statements that were readily accessible, job descriptions and regular evaluations, and especially, written records of all verbal transactions with anyone. To make sure all this happened, I would be sure someone on my staff had this responsibility." Robert Cooley (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary) expresses dismay when he recalls that ". . . I could not find a single statement, a purpose, or a mission that seemed to be the driving force of the institution."

Often participants in the study refer to their institutions as "mom and pop" operations that required them to attend to details not commonly part of a president's direct responsibility in a more typical institution of higher education. In a list of things she has learned since she became president, Barbara Brown Zikmund writes, ". . . it is important to know how to work the lights, the sound system, the copier, the telephone, the FAX machine, the coffee maker, the dictaphone, the computer and various printers, the mailroom postage machine, the security alarms in all three buildings, the file systems where important papers are stored, and the heating and cooling controls. On a daily basis I do not deal with many of these things, yet as the president I need to be able to take care of these things in a pinch."

Many of the changes theological education has undergone recently replicate the basic patterns of transition that occurred at least a decade ago in small colleges. The informal and largely ad hoc nature of administration in most theological schools is no longer adequate for the increasing demands of what it means simply to be an institution in this society. The reports and practices mandated by the federal government and the various accrediting associations establish standards and tasks for seminaries regardless of whether they want them or can afford them. Jack Stotts (Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary) says, ". . . the assumption was that one could increase administrative responsibilities without adding administrative staff and maintain quality. Everything was an add-on. That was a mistaken principle."

Most of the participants readily admitted their inexperience in administration and recognized the need for some sort of training that would give them management knowledge and skills they lacked. In this regard, the Warren Deem Institute of The Association of Theological Schools represented an important form of education for many of the participants. This summer institute on administration in theological education provided them basic understanding of the institutions they were called to serve, requisite techniques for management,

and a community of colleagues with whom they could share worries and concerns. Some participants who came to their positions before the Deem Institute was established found their own forms of “on-the-job training” with the help of grants given by Lilly Endowment to new presidents and deans. These grants of \$25,000 were given directly to them without any strings attached. This made it possible, for example, for James Fenhagen to work with a consultant who became a kind of coach in executive leadership. Other participants who had neither the Lilly grant nor the Deem Institute simply learned by doing the job.

In the midst of coming to grips with the nature of leadership, presidents have lived with some truths they have found along the way. Part of the difficulty in leading theological schools, Douglass Lewis determines, lies in the fact that, “In academia and the church, power is a tricky thing. Leadership requires several kinds of power—expert, coercive, institutional, and charismatic. It takes vision and the ability to build consensus in a diverse community.” As James Kirby reflects, “Folks don’t drop by the dean’s office to offer congratulations or praise on a regular basis even when the job is being done well. As a matter of fact, the better it is done the less it is noticed. Attention comes in abundance, however, when mistakes are made.” Blase J. Cupich (Pontifical College Josephinum) puts this in light of a familiar Bible story: “I often think of the ‘fishers of men’ image that is used to describe leaders of the church. Perhaps instead of seeing our work in terms of going after the big catch by ourselves, we are called upon to work the nets, concentrate on the networking as we carry out the role of ministerial leadership.”

One of the marks of leadership that is more than just management is the cultivation of a perspective on the presidency that places issues in a larger context and sustains the ability to stick with things when the going gets rough and the way ahead is not at all predictable. In this regard, Douglas Oldenburg (Columbia Theological Seminary) suggests, “Perspective, humility, and a healthy psychological resiliency are critical virtues in a seminary president.” Donald Shriver (Union Theological Seminary in New York) observes, “A president’s efforts over time will get cluttered with many false starts and sheer failures. Without some successes from time to time, none of us is likely to endure the failures. Yet when those successes come, they often have about them the air of divine grace, which is why I am quite serious about thanking God for this series of events, which have the quality of a happening more than that of personal achievement.” James Kirby sounds yet one more warning to the unwary: “Trust is the foundation on which effective leadership finally stands, and I continue to be amazed how slowly it is built and how quickly it can be destroyed.”

The Relational Dimension

More than anyone else, presidents and deans embody the schools they lead and serve. “The president,” writes Millard Erickson (Bethel Theological Seminary), “is the person who must dream the dreams, the visionary who must conceive the mission and direction of the school, in short, the person who must primarily conceive of what the school is to be.” In its depths, however, the office is defined by the president’s role as a public, institutional figure—a person who is responsible to institutional traditions, practices, and mission. Leander Keck (Yale University Divinity School) observes, “. . . no professor bears the same responsibility for the entire community as the dean. After all, a faculty member, in the name of what is deemed good for the school, can raise all sorts of hell at a meeting and go home; it is the dean who must overcome such a scene and keep the school on course.” Robert Cooley reiterates that, “My task was seen as cultivation and involvement of as many groups and persons as possible in the life of the school. I have come to understand that this requires tremendous energy, time, involvement, and visibility.” In a similar observation, Jack Stotts tells us, “First, I learned that a seminary president needs to know the local territory and be a citizen of the community Second, the president has to give leadership at times out of a sense of what is not only possible but also from a sense of what the institution needs for its short- and long-term health Third, I learned that credibility for a president is related to different activities for different board members, as well as other constituencies.”

Another important learning for a new president is the recognition that while the office is larger than his or her person, this distinction is not necessarily made in the give and take of institutional life. Donald Shriver reminds us that “. . . I had to learn not to take personally every hostile communication that came my way. For better and for worse, a president is the representative head of the institution. The office is the inheritor of all the resentments that may have accumulated against the institution; it is the office where ‘the buck stops’ for all current complaints against anyone in the institution.” This is the discovery of the symbolic nature of the office and the president’s accountability not just to the daily affairs of the school but to the generations in the past and the future who claim the institution.

Early on, it is easy for the new president to be lulled by the positive transferences that often accompany entry into this office. It is not so easy to deal with the negative projections that come sooner or later. James Kirby says, “. . . the toll which each year takes has become high enough for me now to consider seriously whether the joys and satisfactions in the job outweigh the pain.” The

effort to find creativity in the tension between the personal and public aspects of the presidency never ceases as presidents sort the varied issues they face and the sometimes confusing dynamics that arise in relationships with so many different constituencies. In looking back over his many years of leadership, Vincent Cushing comments on this struggle with faith and identity that the office demands: "It has been a wonderful experience: hard, demanding, testing one's faith and one's strength. In the midst of it I found out who I am, both for good and for ill."

The president's struggle with the nature of his or her office is a continuing experience that is resolved in one moment only to be redefined and reinterpreted in another. For some presidents who are accustomed to the relatively private world of the faculty, the public character of this struggle can be unsettling. In the best moments, though, it can be transposed as a positive means of exercising the teaching office of the presidency. Blase Cupich describes this goal when he says, "What the seminarians learn about leadership from me is in the long run the real test of my success as the president of this seminary." This requires maturity and the willingness to grow in ways that could not be anticipated before becoming president.

Although it is not easy to take the criticism that at times seems unrelenting for some presidents, it is possible to see even criticism in a positive frame. Jack Stotts affirms, ". . . it is good to be abased by a friendly colleague from time to time." He goes on to say, "It reminds me that to be a seminary president is an important gift, but not the major one, in the preparation of leaders for the church of Jesus Christ. It reminds me that if you are privileged to have had options for what to do with your life, you are among the privileged of the world. And whatever one chooses in response to what is perceived—sometimes very faintly—as God's call, the calling one experiences is shaped by a tradition that continually claims that privilege is for service of the cause of God and neighbors."

When theological schools were composed of a more homogeneous community of persons who shared common backgrounds, aspirations, and reference groups, the symbolic level of the president's office was complex but not so uncertain as it is now when there is so little agreement on purposes and so much conflict among interests. James Kirby observes, "The first thing I have had to learn is that I can never expect to get it right . . . I have also learned there will be situations in which the results will be negative no matter what is done." Haddon Robinson warns: ". . . virtually every action a president takes has a price tag on it."

Participants in the study refer especially to the radical change in the nature of students: they are older, more personally demanding, and remarkably diverse in vocational, cultural, and sexual orientation. Robert Cooley remarks that, "From the standpoint of the institution, the increased student body has sustained the viability of the school and has increased its efficiency in serving the churches and their needs. On the other hand, it has not settled the discussion regarding the nature of theological education, its definition, and its central focus." Haddon Robinson warns, "More disturbing, an increasing number of students enroll in seminary for the wrong reasons. What should be a calling is sometimes a pathology."

Presidents recognize that their relationships with students especially are often defined by the anti-institutionalism pervading our culture. While the president in another time might have been looked upon as a benign figure of authority, today the student attitude tends to be one of suspicion. There are few institutions in which there is a significant threshold of student trust. Presidents try ways of building relationships that cannot be otherwise taken for granted. Jack Stotts tells us, "I maintained an open-door policy for both faculty and students but soon discovered that how many people were willing to enter that door depended on how much I took the initiative to walk out of it and onto their 'turf,' providing thereby an ethos of openness and interest."

As difficult as relationships may be with a changing student body, it is the relationship with faculty that is most frustrating for presidents. Expecting to work with faculty as colleagues, the participants in the study reiterate their disappointment in finding that becoming president defined the relationship with faculty in ways that made it more formal, distant, and sometimes adversarial. Jack Stotts recalls his experience this way, "... if my own experiences . . . can be generalized, I believe that the president is tempted to mourn the loss of faculty members as his or her primary personal and internal constituency and to find himself or herself spending more time and energy with other administrators. They become the primary internal community for the president, personally and professionally."

The nature of faculty relationships forced participants to change some of their own ways of being. Arthur Van Seters (Vancouver School of Theology) cautions, "As I see it people in my position are in a bit of a bind. On the one hand I want to be as open as possible with people with whom I work and whose contribution I value. But I can't think out loud. I can't 'try things out' in my speaking because my office gives more weight to that than I intend. So that makes me careful about what I say." It is easy to become bitter and angry in view of faculty egos and lack of support. How to keep alive a spirit of hope and an

attitude of trust in the face of sometimes fractious faculty behavior is one of the greatest (and continuing) presidential dilemmas.

One of the surprises registered by the participants is discovering the importance of trustees. At first, this discovery is the awareness of the board of trustees' significant authority in the life of the school and the crucial role of trustees in the financial support of the institution. Gradually, however, this functional recognition of trustees is matched by the emerging sense of the trustees as a community of primary reference for the president and the growing recognition that the board, or at least some core group of trustees, can become a center of support, critical inquiry, and long-term thinking. Again, Jack Stotts: "Trustees became sources of strength for the seminary and for myself. They were not window dressing. They were critical for the long-term health and vitality of the school." In this regard, the participants refer to their own continuing education in the nature of trusteeship and the relatively new idea of trustee development as central to the presidential office. Blase Cupich says, ". . . I honestly believe that the best contribution I can make during my time as president will be in developing the board." The Association of Governing Boards' Seminars for Presidents and Board Chairs and the Lilly Endowment grants for trusteeship were named as important means for understanding and implementing practices of board development.

An aspect of the relational dimension of the president's work most often mentioned was the growing demand of dealing with multiple constituencies. As the apparatus of denominations is downsizing and the denominations themselves are undergoing their own "restructuring," the expectations of judiciatories and denominational agencies are expanding and becoming more demanding. The irony is that as denominational support declines, the regulatory function of the denomination increases.³ The impact of this structural change is directly felt by presidents who must respond to all of these various agencies, officials, and interest groups. The problem is compounded by the fact that given the lack of institutional clarity in the church, all of this representational and political work requires the president's presence. When the politics of the church reign, then every issue becomes a symbolic one that in effect calls for renegotiating everything. In this kind of context, the president cannot easily delegate the representational role. By the time all these various meetings and negotiations are set (usually by outside agencies), there is not much room left on the president's schedule. Moreover, this kind of work takes energy, it adds stress, and it does not necessarily produce much in the way of results that sustain momentum or give hope. James Fenhagen frankly says, "I found the prestige and contacts that came with the job a heady experience that I had to come to terms with. I miss

some of that stimulation but also after a while began to find it exhausting," and, equally candid, Vincent Cushing remarks, "I often feel a pervasive sense of staleness, that I've seen all of this before and there is nothing new under the sun."

The Interpretive Dimension

What seems to sustain presidents in the midst of the demands of their office (other than the obvious virtues of faith, hope, and love) is the ability to bring a critical, interpretive, and ultimately imaginative dimension to their work. As Lawrence Jones (Howard University School of Divinity) says, "Effective leadership begins with the assumption that the institution to which one is related is worthy of the best that one can bring to it." The participants who seem overwhelmed by the job generally reduce their office to personalistic terms. They often try to translate institutional issues into personal categories that essentially blame themselves (or take too much credit) for seminary issues and circumstances.

At the heart of the interpretive dimension is the recognition that the school has a history and, moreover, it lives in history. Douglas Oldenburg affirms, "It is also important to have a sense of history and a confident hope for the future. Every president knows that he or she 'builds on foundations laid by others,' and we are called to lay foundations upon which others will build for the greater glory of God." Leander Keck phrases it this way, "... the dean is an impermanent officer, a momentary steward into whose hands are entrusted for a specified time the leadership of the school." Donald Shriver reminds us that, "Whether or not they are graduates of the school, presidents must buy into its history. Not to study and appropriate its past is to wander blindfolded into its future." This history is not necessarily observable in the external chronology of the school's life. More often than not it is an internal history lived out in symbols, rituals, stories and, yes, gossip, that provide the emotional texture of the school. It is the stuff of shadows as much as light, and it is a sometime thing that cannot often be explicitly described, but whose form can be detected in shaping attitudes and coalescing feelings.

The school is defined greatly by its context. Its life is directly affected by current issues in the church, society, and higher education. In this sense, it does not live by itself alone. It is tied to churches, social movements, and economic developments. The discovery that this "fish lives in water," as H. Richard Niebuhr once pointed out, can be a point of framing the current issues of the school's life. For example, as I have indicated, most of the participants experienced the shock of discovering the financial fragility of their schools. The

immediate short-term goal of fixing the situation as it showed up in some particular problem, however, was soon superseded by the recognition that a short-term solution was inadequate to address longer-term needs. Donald Shriver recalls, "Surprising to me was my realization that it had taken me five years to learn that our budget crisis could not be solved by the formula, 'raise more money.' " How to interpret this significant issue, place it in a wider institutional perspective, and provide a broader contextual understanding were some of the questions faced by these presidents and deans.

In a similar vein, the participants have had to learn how to discern the internal dynamics of the school. The familiar search for "community" has often obfuscated the hard task of looking at the complex life of the school. Often this search for community is essentially the yearning for harmony and agreement. The greater need, however, is for the development of practices of institutional life that permit diverse groups and individuals to share a common life, though no total agreement or harmony will ever be sustained. In this regard, the president's task is not so much to maintain harmony, though that is often the expectation, as it is to develop policies and procedures that maintain fairness and sustain equity among the competing interests of the institution. This is less glamorous than the typical search for "community" but in the long run it probably serves that goal more effectively. To a great extent this is a "servant" role of the presidency that goes unnoticed, but it is in such care for the form of the school that integrity and fidelity are expressed.

In its most creative expression, the interpretive dimension is expressed in communicating the vision and mission of the school. At the heart of this dimension is the president's work as the one who tells the story of the school, points out its distinctiveness, and evokes a sense of its current historical moment. To analyze is to interpret, and one of the best forms of interpretation is storytelling. The image that comes through, of presidents who see their work interpretively, is not that of the quantifier of information. Instead it is the image of a leader who has a sense of history and a sense of the institution's continuing story. This kind of work helps the whole institution gain a sense of perspective. Most importantly, it enables presidents to perceive themselves apart from absolutist personal categories of success or failure. Again, Donald Shriver remarks, "In spite of vision and ambition, no president solves all the problems. Every solution that one has superintended has its cost . . ." He goes on to reflect on the impact of downsizing: "Throwing away cargo is hard on any ship captain . . . In the process the thought must naturally occur: How much can we throw away and still be making the voyage worthwhile?" Framing and telling the story of the voyage is a president's responsibility. Understanding a school's history

and interpreting its current mission make up crucial work done well by many of the participants.

The Strategic Dimension

Along with trustees, the president is most accountable for the overall well-being of the school. The integrity of the whole is the focus of the president's office. This is usually anticipatory work. The problems that compete for attention are almost all tied to everyday issues, and it is easy to let these proverbial trees obscure the forest. Most participants allude to the difficulty of getting so mired down by immediate issues that they lose sight of what lies ahead. James Kirby recalls, "After reading a report from two of the bishops in our area, one of my colleagues commented to me, 'If this is really what they expect of us, there is no way we can be a school.'" Translating these particular issues into problems that should be addressed in a strategic plan is the president's continuing work.

The ability to go out ahead and scout the territory that is to come is no incidental virtue. This ability is recognized by participants as essential to their responsibilities. This may mean advocating directions and policies for the school that are not self-evident, but require interpretation and planning to bring into being. At the heart of this ability is taking time to think and to reflect in the midst of competing demands for attention. Presidents who take this time and claim it over other involvements affirm its significance for strategic work.

In different ways, presidents think of themselves as institution builders. In the best expressions of this image, building the institution means equipping it for service and trying to raise standards throughout the school. The difficulty for presidents comes when their hopes for the institution have to be changed and modified by institutional realities. What a president expects the school to become may not turn out to be what it is called to do or what the president is able to do. Robert Leavitt (St. Mary's Seminary and University School of Theology) frankly observes that, "the tragic side of leadership is that sometimes a president-rector or a faculty is just not up to the task of the hour. New faculty, like a new president, may sometimes be necessary to achieve the full potential of an institution. No one is happy about this, but a leader may have to realize it."

The strategic dimension of presidential leadership is perhaps the most theological aspect of the president's work; it is the work of a practical theologian. Luder G. Whitlock, Jr. (Reformed Theological Seminary) says, ". . . more than ever it has become apparent to me that the president of a seminary must be a person of vision with the ability and perseverance to champion that vision." It is this work that gives a sense of fulfillment.

The tension between the work and calling of the president's office is central to understanding the nature of the office itself. The president comes to the office out of a profound sense of calling centered in the responsibility of leading a community of learning that seeks to be a faithful instrument of the church's mission. Almost immediately, though, the institutional need for management tends to overwhelm the larger issues of leadership. More and more presidents translate the nature of their leadership into operational tasks. They learn how to manage, attend training seminars, and try to become responsible executive officers. This development is essentially a result of lean staffs that do not have senior administrators to assume responsibility for operating the school. There is little money, even in the wealthier theological schools, to imitate the full-fledged staffing profiles of colleges and universities. Thus, presidents are involved in levels of administration that often deter them from the more long-term responsibilities that over time tend to get put on hold as more immediate issues demand attention. The problem is that the president, in this all too familiar scenario, is pulled away from the responsibilities only the president can do and the tasks that the president's own sense of calling allow him or her to do well. The strategic dimension that could draw upon a president's deep sense of vocation is too often placed by the side of the road. The president's understanding of the importance of the vision out of which communities are called into being is given less and less importance as managerial problems crowd the desk.

The levels of long-term change throughout the denominations and theological education constitute a volatile environment. Seminaries cannot simply attend to immediate issues. The difficulty is the way in which short-term and long-term issues now converge, and the president's office is the place where this convergence is most noticeably felt. The urgency of both raising the yearly budget and building endowment for the future is recognized. However, this aspect of the presidency requires new skills. Vincent Cushing says simply, "Raise money? Me? How?" In a similar manner, Jack Stotts admits, "I was lousy in that area, both conceptually and behaviorally."

In order for fundraising to be most effective, the school's mission has to be compellingly communicated. This is most of all the president's responsibility. How the president sets aside time to think about the vision and mission of the school and how that story is crafted are essential concerns. Without adequate staffing, the president too often is pulled into levels of fundraising that are time consuming, yet may actually ignore the long-term financial goals of the school.

The strategic dimension of the presidency, then, is primarily one of vision. It emerges from the president's own sense of vocation and concern with the calling of the school itself. When this dimension is missing, then the school may

do things right but it may not do the right things or be headed in the right direction. Moreover, the less prominent this dimension is in the practices of a president, the farther the president is removed from the energy and imagination required for serving in the office.

Observations

Vocation

The theme that runs throughout these reflections is the importance of *vocation*—the sense of being called to the office of president. This is the ground upon which the knowledge and skills of the president's work are based. It is the sense of being summoned to responsibility that brings men and women to this office. Ambition, personal needs, and professional circumstances all figure into this sense of vocation, but at its center is the affirmation that this is work that God calls one to do. Donald Shriver suggests, "God has lots of pots and earthen vessels for carrying around treasure, and neither overweening pride nor self-derogating modesty should obscure the faith in the response, 'Okay, here am I, send me.'" James De Jong expresses, perhaps, the ideal when he says, "My life has been characterized by openness to God's leading rather than by being driven or compelled by specific goals."

Presidents indicate that this sense of calling was the essential reason they wanted to take up the work of leading a theological school as a ministry of the church. Douglas Oldenburg says, "... the most persuasive consideration which prompted my interest and later decision to accept the call was my deep commitment to the church and the growing conviction that nothing is more important to the future of the church than the training of her leaders." Jack Stotts recalls, "I remember feeling awed, thrilled, scared, and excited about the prospects of this community for faithful service to the church and the world. This community compelled my willing consent to the call."

Some of the presidents' reflections suggest a hesitancy to speak in a sustained way of the complexity of this vocation. Loneliness, personal criticism, physical weariness, and family difficulties are just some of the dynamics identified by the participants. When these difficulties are mentioned, however, they are sometimes cast in a stoic mode that does not often connect personal dynamics with the structural and contextual issues that define seminary life.

The latent perfectionism still attached to the president's office makes it difficult to address the personal aspects of the position. One of the effects of this inability to address the human dynamics of the job is that too many presidents burn out early and there is little attempt to redefine the office in a way to make

it more effective and fulfilling. As James Kirby mentioned, there will always be folks interested in being where the “kingin” is, but the question is the quality and fidelity of those who remain interested. In fact, he chose to remain a dean rather than seeking a presidency because of the demands it would place on his family. Douglas Oldenburg, however, recognized the impact of the presidency on his family and indicated that he and his wife had made the adjustment in their own personal lives: “A president today must be willing to be away from his or her family for a significant amount of time and his or her family must be willing to accept this loss.”

James Fenhagen, in particular, was forthright in dealing with the personal cost of his work: “At the time that the seminary was the strongest, my marriage of 30 some years was undergoing immense stress. My heavy involvement in the demands of my job certainly contributed to this as I allowed my preoccupation with my work to blind me to my wife’s pain.” In like manner, Douglass Lewis speaks of how it felt to make hard decisions: “To make God-like decisions that disrupt people’s lives, hopes, and dreams . . . [is] extremely difficult. To have them cry, shout, and declare that they had always loved and trusted me only to have me destroy their family’s future was simply immeasurable in its emotional impact.” For a Catholic priest such as Vincent Cushing, the cost of the presidency was often felt in the lack of a supportive context. The changes in the Catholic Church since the election of Pope John Paul II have directly affected theological education in the Catholic community: “The climate has changed from an open, scholarly inquiry to a repressive, fearful one.”

In conservative evangelical Protestant seminaries, this same sense of attack is felt keenly by presidents. Russell Dilday reflects on these issues and defines the presidency in terms of adaptability to a changing and conflict-filled context: “The presidency does, however, demand a flexible adaptability on the part of the one who would serve. More than likely, a rigid, fragile personality, unwilling to live with ambiguity and unable to understand nuances, would be miserable and short-tenured in the office.” How to live on the boundaries of courage and compromise, flexibility and appeasement requires no little faith and skill. At the least, it requires the willingness to live with ambiguity that Russell Dilday notes in the midst of his own struggle with the coercive forces in his denomination.

Unpredictable Variables: Circumstances and Timing

I found it interesting that few presidents or deans mentioned the unpredictable variables of seminary life. The matter of timing and the presence of fortunate or unfortunate circumstances play a determinative role in life, but there was no allusion made to these issues. Part of what cannot be fully

anticipated is the extent to which the issues confronting the president are so often defined by circumstances beyond his or her control. As C. Ellis Nelson (president emeritus, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary) has often remarked about such institutional issues, “they are seldom logical, but they always have a history.”

In the same way, the difference that the availability of financial resources made to the nature of the presidency was underplayed. In reading the reflections, it was evident that more affluent institutions were in a different place than others with scarce resources. This factor was determinative for the presidency. Finances not only influence an institution’s life, but shape in equally definitive ways the nature of a president’s work and sense of well-being. This is an obvious fact, but it is not a commonplace understanding in theological education.

The question of how to measure success was incidentally discussed, but when it was, a direct connection was made between raising money and a sense of accomplishment in the presidential office. Taking the hard line in financial negotiations and fundraising, for example, was seen by a participant as a way of “earning your spurs.” In this regard, Barbara Brown Zikmund says, “Obviously what you seek money for and what you get money for, shape the character of a school.” However, Robert Cooley observes, “There is much joy as well as much stress associated with the fundraising activity of the presidency. Joy is realized when well-conceived proposals and plans culminate in major grant awards or gifts. Genuine stress is created when anticipated goals are not realized and revenue plans fall short of budget anticipations.”

The work of presidents reflected in this study is complex and demanding. There are too many schools with too few resources doing too much of the same thing. This larger context more and more shapes the presidential office. On the other hand, the presidents in this study who do have a sense of fulfillment (other than those in the few institutions that have significant fiscal resources) are those who are trying to set new directions for the schools they serve and who in some way see their leadership as transformative. A significant issue for many presidents is not so much knowing what should be done, but how to do things when adequate resources simply are not available. Some of the most competent presidents in this study are those who are able to deal with the reality of things not being, or ever becoming, the way they ought to be, but who are able to live with this fact of institutional life and not lose sight of their fundamental responsibility for the mission and future of the school.

Holding in tension the day-to-day tasks with the less obvious but nevertheless compelling goals that these tasks serve constitutes the point-counterpoint of presidential identity. “Leading well also requires courage. This virtue, after all,

can only be learned through real danger. When you want to run, you don't. Instead, you stay and face the trouble head on," says Robert F. Leavitt. In the end, though, participants affirm that the office is worth the difficulties it presents. As Robert Cooley affirms, "I have discovered it [the presidency] to be 'splendid agony.' "

ENDNOTES

1. Participants and the institutions they served at the time of the study:
Robert Cooley, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Blase Cupich, Pontifical College Josephinum
Vincent Cushing, Washington Theological Union
James De Jong, Calvin Theological Seminary
Russell Dilday, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Millard Erickson, Bethel Theological Seminary
James Fenhagen, General Theological Seminary
Lawrence Jones, Howard University School of Divinity
Leander Keck, Yale University Divinity School
James Kirby, Perkins School of Theology
Robert Leavitt, St. Mary's Seminary and University School of Theology
G. Douglass Lewis, Wesley Theological Seminary
Douglas W. Oldenburg, Columbia Theological Seminary
Hadden Robinson, Denver Seminary
Donald Shriver, Union Theological Seminary in New York
Mark Sisk, Seabury-Western Theological Seminary
Jack Stotts, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Arthur Van Seters, Vancouver School of Theology
Luder G. Whitlock, Jr., Reformed Theological Seminary
Barbara Brown Zikmund, Hartford Seminary
2. These categories are somewhat arbitrary. Obviously there are many ways to schematize the president's work. In thinking about these categories, I have found the work of Richard P. Chait, Thomas P. Holland, and Barbara E. Taylor to be of help. In their study of effective boards of trustees, they isolated six dimensions: contextual, educational, interpersonal, analytical, political, and strategic. See: *The Effective Board of Trustees* (New York: MacMillan, 1991).
3. Craig R. Dykstra and James Hudnut-Beumler have made this observation in their privately distributed essay, "The Organizational Ecology of Protestant Denominations: A Query," (1991).

Toward Understanding the Seminary Presidency: Reflections of One President

Robert E. Cooley

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Enjoyment and satisfaction, to me, is facing a challenge and overcoming it. My vocation as a seminary president, for all its hard work, pain, and pressure, has never been anything but enjoyable and satisfying. It is from this perspective that I share my reflections on being a seminary president.

My educational preparation for my presidential ministry was in the fields of anthropology, archaeology, and Near Eastern studies, having received my Ph.D. from New York University. I value highly these anthropological studies for the insights they gave that enabled me to understand the infrastructure of the seminary community, how to manage its diverse parts and to introduce needed change. Institutional culture must be fully understood if a president is to lead and manage successfully.

Upon reflection, no formal training for the presidency could have provided me with so many insights, skills, and relevant knowledge than the combination of educational experiences I have enjoyed. My lack of seminary training did not impair my sense of readiness and qualification. The varied institutional and professional service I have enjoyed includes serving Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, for eight years as its dean of men, dean of students, and academic dean. I served Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, for three years as its director of archaeological studies and associate professor of archaeology and biblical studies. During this period, I was granted a six-month leave on an alumni scholarship and served as assistant to the president of Dropsie University in Philadelphia, while I completed my Ph.D. dissertation. I later served as professor of archaeological studies in a joint program at Evangel College and Drury College, and later, the dean of the college at Evangel College. From there I went to Southwest Missouri State University with a joint appointment in the Department of Religious Studies and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. I also served there as director of the Center for Archaeological Research.

In addition to this formal educational experience, I have read widely on the history and meaning of theological education. Management procedures, economic modeling, fundraising programs, and curricular design have also occupied

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my reading. And, over the years, I have continued to read the journals and newsletters in my academic field as well as constantly nurturing my spiritual life with biblical and devotional reading, prayer, and worship.

The Presidential Search and Appointment

Following Dr. Harold John Ockenga's retirement as president of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 1979, the board of trustees appointed a search committee of trustees, faculty, and others within the seminary community. This "first search committee," following the standard process, advertised, received applications and nominations, and interviewed candidates. Finalists were brought to the campus for interviews which resulted in conflicting opinions and an unsatisfactory experience. After a year, the committee itself proposed to disband and report "no success" to the board of trustees. As a result, a second search committee was appointed, made up only of members of the board of trustees.

George F. Bennett, for 25 years the treasurer of Harvard University and the president of the State Street Management and Research Corporation, was appointed chair of the committee. Mr. Bennett was willing to serve in this capacity, providing the board appoint as a new trustee Dr. Samuel J. Schultz, the recently retired professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College. Knowing that Dr. Schultz was a person of wide acquaintances, Mr. Bennett believed that his membership on the committee would open the possibility of new contacts to presidential candidates. This second search committee began its process near the end of 1980.

In November 1980, the Society for Biblical Literature and the American Schools for Oriental Research conducted their annual meetings in Dallas, Texas, at which I delivered a paper. Dr. Schultz was at the meeting and was seated next to one of my colleagues from the Religious Studies Department of Southwest Missouri State University. In conversation Dr. Schultz mentioned the need for presidential candidates at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. My colleague suggested that he talk with me following the presentation of my paper, which he did. I was quite content in my university appointment and had major research underway involving many years of explorations in the Middle East. My intention was to spend the rest of my active professional career in this task. Dr. Schultz, in outlining the presidential opportunity, requested both an expression of my interest and my biographical vitae.

Toward the end of February 1981, Dr. Schultz telephoned me, asking why I had not yet sent the information he requested. After a brief conversation I agreed to send the vitae, but indicated no active interest in the position.

Early in March, he called again to report that the search committee had reviewed my resume and desired a conversation. I was invited to meet with the committee in mid-March in Boston. I did not know that the committee had also invited two other candidates to meet with the committee on the same day, but at different times. My wife, Eileen, and I both felt that we should at least explore this invitation as a possible new direction. Dr. Schultz's role is significant, inasmuch as he and I were colleagues on the Wheaton College faculty during the 1960s.

I met with the search committee for three hours on a Saturday morning. I found the committee members to be friendly, informal in the interview process, and engaged in a number of broad issues and activities. As the morning conversation proceeded, there appeared to be a growing interest in my service. At the noon hour, I was asked whether I would be willing to stay through lunch and delay my departure to a later flight, which I agreed to do. After six hours of conversation, essentially exploring the universe of institutional management, leadership, and church issues, the conversation concluded with the instruction that the committee would be back in contact with me sometime in the next 30 days. I returned to Springfield, having enjoyed the day, and with a growing interest in the presidential opportunity.

Early the next morning, I received a telephone call from George Bennett, in which he indicated enthusiastic interest on the part of the committee in my availability. He requested that Eileen and I return to meet with the board of trustees, and we agreed.

We traveled to Boston with many questions and concerns, but were received warmly and with ease. We were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett at their Hingham residence. We met the board of trustees at the Union Club in downtown Boston. It was the board's plan to spend most of the day in conversation with us and then to arrive at a decision. Once again, the conversation was informal, with inquiries across a wide range of subjects of institutional management and leadership. Toward mid-afternoon, the board expressed the desire to vote on my candidacy, and I was asked to leave the room. I was not prepared for such formal action so early in the process.

A short time later, the chairman of the board invited me back into the room and informed me that the board had voted unanimously to offer me the position

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of president of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. I was not asked whether or not I would accept, but rather, "When can you start?" I suggested that should we accept the invitation, we would plan to begin July 1, 1981.

That evening, at a nearby restaurant, we met with a large number of faculty and administrators, an event arranged only that day. We were introduced to the group and then the chairman of the board highlighted the board's process and presented our background and experience in some detail. I was given an opportunity to present greetings to the group, expecting a time for questions and a response. This was not to be the case. Immediately following my greetings, the chairman of the board challenged the group to join with us in opening a new chapter in the history of the seminary, and then dismissed the evening program in a prayer for all. Following the prayer, I had brief conversations with those present as they passed by our table.

I recall my disappointment that evening that I did not have an opportunity to interact more with the faculty. Given my years of experience as a faculty member myself, I was not concerned about potentially difficult questions and issues. I believed they could be handled in a proper way, thereby granting me an opportunity to establish an initial relationship with the faculty. Eventually, I learned what I had feared. The faculty, by not being a part of the search process and not having the opportunity to engage me in even brief conversation, felt no sense of ownership of the process or allegiance to me. This was an issue to be overcome in future months.

Following our return to Springfield, I decided that it would be prudent to arrange for a meeting with the faculty as soon as possible for the purpose of general conversation on viewpoints and issues. One month later, I returned to the seminary with two purposes in mind. First, I wanted to meet with the faculty to learn their concerns and how they viewed the current challenge for leadership. An afternoon meeting was arranged, and the entire faculty was present. We had an excellent exchange, covering subjects ranging from leadership style to definition of roles to matters of fundraising. No subjects that could have resulted in contrary positions emerged. From my point of view, the faculty conversation had been extremely successful.

My second purpose for this visit was to review the seminary budget and its current accounting of finances. I needed to know early the fiscal position of the seminary and what was being planned for the next fiscal year. I spent an entire day with the business manager reviewing these matters, and as far as I could see, all accounts were in order and the school was operating within budget and a planned surplus. Later, I was to learn that this was not actually the case.

These two matters, faculty-president relationship and fiscal management, were the earliest institutional crises I would face.

Having made the long trip to New England, I asked myself, "What does a newly appointed seminary president do during the first days in the office?" First, I discovered very little activity on the campus. There were very few summer classes, most of the faculty had departed for assignments beyond New England, and staff vacations were underway. This was quite a contrast for me coming from a university of some 17,000 students and 1,000 faculty members with an extremely busy schedule of summer courses. The contrast was immediately felt and a sense of loneliness settled into our lives. I was to discover that this loneliness is an emotion that lingers throughout the presidential experience.

I became acquainted with the office of the president by reviewing the files and reflecting upon the special history and programs of the institution. The seminary had a strong faculty and reputation, but it was evident to me that I could not find a single statement, a purpose, or a mission that seemed to be the driving force of the institution. I decided to test this discovery and arranged to introduce myself to 44 individuals during the next two months. My objective was to ask them the question, "What is the mission of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary?" To my amazement, I received 44 different responses. No two statements were alike, and this confirmed that little thought had been given by the board and faculty to the mission of the institution. This task was where I would begin.

Following these conversations, and after a lengthy conversation by telephone with the chairman of the board in California, I established five priorities for my immediate attention. These priorities were:

1. The formation of a statement of mission.
2. Review known personnel issues.
3. Evaluate salaries and plan for increases.
4. Design a system of staff organization, prepare a staff manual, and establish a human resources office.
5. Design and implement a traditional institutional administrative organization, prepare job descriptions for the administrative staff, and begin the process of introducing administrative innovations.

I believe, strongly, that the most important responsibility of a board of trustees is to create and define the statement of mission. Then, and only then, should the board proceed to its second priority, the selection of a president. In

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this order, a president can be selected who will in turn carry out the accepted mission of the institution. The statement of mission is like a compass on a ship—it gives direction and insures that the ship will arrive in port. A properly selected president, with compass and charts in hand, can provide the institutional ship with an effective command.

The Presidency in Three Stages: How My Presidency Has Changed

It has been helpful to me to look on my presidency in terms of issues to be addressed and responses to be designed. From this perspective, my tenure may be divided into three periods:

1981-1985	Institutional Governance and Structure
1986-1991	Capital Development and Program Formation
1992-Present	Financial Stabilization and Institutional Reshaping

1981-1985: Institutional Governance and Structure

The immediate challenge for my presidential leadership was to establish a form of traditional institutional governance and structure. To understand that need, one needs to recall that the merger between Conwell School of Theology and Gordon Divinity School was accomplished in 1969. This brought together contrasting but compatible resources. The Conwell part of the merger brought committed trustees and, through the generosity of its leader, J. Howard Pew, financial resources. In addition, there was the Conwell commitment to urban ministry, especially the education of African Americans. The Gordon part of the merger provided a developed and mature faculty, academic programs accredited by The Association of Theological Schools, and quality trustees who could be enlisted for the board to be formed for the merged institution.

The official separation of Gordon Divinity School from Gordon College had taken place in 1976, and the period that followed had been devoted to stabilizing the institution, board operations and expansion, and attending to the needs of a growing seminary student community. The expansion of the seminary budget, faculty, and programs had been possible because of the student enrollment growth and increase in tuition revenues. The annual gift income remained fairly stable on an annual basis at about \$500,000. Shortly thereafter, the president, Dr. Harold J. Ockenga, retired and the previously mentioned first search committee for a new president was appointed.

The energies of the board and seminary administrators during the decade of the 1970s were devoted to handling the merger and its consequences, and the pending retirement of the president. During this period, the major planning and program leadership was handled by the faculty. The roles of the president and the board were minimal in terms of the academic programs and educational life of the seminary. It was evident after my early days in the office of the president that Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary was a faculty-directed institution. It was inevitable that tension should exist in the governance process, and that to effect the radical change desired by the board of trustees would be confrontational and difficult.

I devoted my early energies to the design and implementation of institutional administration and organization that would provide for a more standard governance process. There was an administrative cabinet made up of the executive vice president, the academic dean, the business manager, and the dean of students, chaired by the president. There was no development department or officer. The faculty handled its affairs through six academic departments and a faculty senate.

The organizational plan I designed for the administration included three executive divisions: academic affairs, financial affairs, and institutional advancement. Each executive division had three or four appropriate departments which grouped together related functions and support services. Each division was assigned a vice president. They, along with the president, formed the administrative management of the seminary. The Administrative Council was revised to that of a President's Cabinet and was expanded to include a faculty representative. The underlying purpose was to begin to develop a channel through which the faculty could have voice in a proper and legitimate fashion in the governance process. This has been a most successful relationship and one that has served well throughout these many years. In addition to a President's Cabinet, an Academic Council was formed for the purpose of integrating administrative planning and budget concerns with the faculty concerns for curriculum and student services. An Administrative Council was formed, which focused its attention on the operational needs of the seminary. These two councils provided recommendations to the President's Cabinet, which had the responsibility of management policy formation and institutional planning.

This redesign called for the president to chair each faculty meeting. The agenda and administration of the faculty would be under the direction of the vice president for academic affairs. Having the president chair the faculty meetings symbolized that the president was the agent of the board and, in turn, represented the faculty to the board. A governance process was being forged in

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this manner between the board, the president, and the faculty. The Faculty Senate was eliminated and in its place, two faculty committees were established: a Faculty Personnel Policies Committee and an Academic Policies Committee. The Faculty Personnel Policies Committee was responsible for faculty personnel and welfare issues, whereas the Academic Policies Committee was responsible for course, curriculum, and program needs. These two committees referred their recommendations to the faculty, who in turn forwarded their actions to the president and the board of trustees. The six academic departments were combined into three academic divisions: Biblical Studies, Christian Thought, and The Ministry of the Church. This allowed for new collegial relations to be established and for a broader disciplinary perspective in terms of curriculum and personnel decisions.

While the reshaping of the administration and organization was underway, my major thrust was to engage the seminary community in that most important process of establishing a statement of mission. A Mission Committee was established, chaired by a distinguished member of the faculty. Five members of the faculty were appointed to the committee, along with representatives of the administration, staff, students, alumni, and local ministers. This 16-member committee worked for one full year to draft a statement of mission. The draft statement was referred to the president, who then asked the entire faculty to review the statement and make recommendations. Students, alumni, staff, administration, and trustees were invited to comment as well. This process of comment engaged the entire community and elevated interest and enthusiasm for the emerging mission of the school. The comments were referred back to the committee for its further consideration and the preparation of a final draft.

The final draft was referred to the president. I received it with great appreciation and recognition of the total community involvement. I then referred the statement of mission on to a special committee of trustees on seminary goals. This committee spent considerable time with the document, making slight revisions, and recommending its approval by the board of trustees. The full board considered it in January 1983, and enthusiastically endorsed the statement of mission. This statement served not only as a compass, but as an anchor to the institution during the challenging decade of the 1980s. It was agreed that the statement should be reviewed every 10 years. The first revision was accomplished in 1992 with a minimal amount of change to the statement in the light of global changes and new needs.

The major personnel advances, as a result of the restructuring of the organization, were in the area of staff. A professional agency was secured as

consultants for the purpose of developing a system of human resources. Job descriptions were prepared for each position, in keeping with the newly defined organizational plan. Staff personnel policies were articulated and implemented. An office of human resources was established, and all personnel management assignments and functions were handled according to the new policies and procedures. The office became a focal point of staff interest, and it has allowed for an orderly form of communication and personnel relationship to emerge. A faculty handbook, a staff handbook, and an administrative manual were prepared and approved. These manuals are continually reviewed and updated in keeping with emerging policies and new procedures.

The fiscal management and budget of the seminary called for even greater effort and redesign. It became clear that the accounting procedures and budget system were inadequate for the seminary. I had entered the presidency with the understanding that the seminary always operated with a balanced budget. After a few months, I discovered that this was achieved by rolling over into the next budget year costs and accounting charges. In reality, the seminary was operating with a deficit of approximately \$600,000. It became necessary to remove personnel and hire a qualified accountant and financial manager. This individual reorganized the fiscal management of the seminary, including the installation of a computer-based management information system, new accounting procedures, audit requirements, a new budget process, and the organization of auxiliary enterprises and other necessary support services.

The restructuring of the institutional organization, the establishment of a personnel system, and the introduction of an accountable financial system made possible the evaluation of the salary system and potential means of increases. Salaries were considerably lower at the seminary than in regional schools and the national averages. New salary scales were introduced for both faculty and staff, which allowed for a rank and grade system to be implemented. Numerous inequities were immediately addressed, and a greater effort toward an equitable base was established. The salary increases resulted in an immediate increase in employee morale.

Once the task force on mission had completed its work, it was important to keep the faculty focus in a futuristic mode. We needed to begin building on the foundation established in the statement of mission in order to work toward outcomes. Three task forces were appointed for planning purposes: a task force on educational planning, a task force on community life, and a task force on financial stability. All three of these groups provided outstanding work, and their recommendations stabilized the newly founded institutional order and

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structure. By 1985, a sense of community order, governance, and authority was established, and the institution was now prepared to begin implementing in a more formal way a statement of vision and program development.

This first stage of my presidency culminated in one of the most painful moments for me as a consequence of the numerous changes and fast pace of implementation of the new order. The underlying issue was a sense of loss on the part of the faculty of their authority to direct the affairs of the institution. In their judgment, the president lacked integrity in handling the administrative affairs of the seminary, and therefore did not have the confidence of the faculty. The issue of integrity focused on the release of persons, changes in job assignments, and the handling of policy decisions through the organizational design phase. One of the lessons I learned during this confrontation was that the manner in which the president handled management decisions and issues, the style and substance of communication, and public appearances and presentations, all needed to be handled with a perception of consistency and harmony. It was evident that too much had been accomplished in too short a period of time, and that major changes had dislocated traditional centers of authority and decision-making.

This event turned out to be the watershed in my experience as president and clearly established the board of trustees as the ultimate authority. Upon receiving a formal letter from the faculty, I immediately called the faculty into session and addressed their issues with the promise that more meetings and discussions would be forthcoming. Prior to this, I had maintained an open door policy to faculty to become better acquainted and to learn of substantive issues. It was this practice that seemed to create a sense of conflicting information, and so I adopted a more formal approach, closing the door and asking the faculty to communicate through the newly organized channels of organization and authority.

In discussing the faculty letter with the chairman of the board, he suggested that he appoint four members of the board to serve as an advisory group to me in the handling of the situation. I maintained constant communication with this newly appointed group of trustees for the purpose of seeking their counsel and allowing the board to design its own response and actions. The trustee group also conferred with the faculty leaders to gain a first-hand understanding of the issues involved. It was decided that the board of trustees would meet with the faculty to discuss the entire matter and to bring the concern to conclusion. One late afternoon in May 1985, the trustees met with the faculty, aired the issues, and established a sense of order and authority. What the board accomplished

through this meeting and the handling of the entire affair was to demonstrate to the faculty that the board was the ultimate and final authority. The president was its agent and was responsible for carrying out its requests and intentions, which was exactly what had been accomplished to date. The board also informed the faculty that it had functional authority to handle matters of curriculum and the educational program. This painful experience, though confrontational on the one hand, was absolutely necessary on the other hand to stabilize the newly implemented administrative and organizational structures. The seminary was now prepared to enter into the next stage of presidential leadership.

1986-1991: Capital Development and Program Formation

With the institutional structure now fully in place, the board and the president could devote their time to establishing a statement of vision and providing resources for the development of the school. At the same time, the faculty were engaged in the formation of new programs, curriculum review, and adjusting faculty prerogatives and administration.

Capital development may best be understood in terms of developing both the annual fund and the endowment fund, along with the construction of new buildings to serve the expanding campus program. The impetus for this form of development came from the decision of The Pew Charitable Trusts to modify their annual institutional support. Some background information is necessary to understand the force of this announcement.

J. Howard Pew, philanthropist and entrepreneur of the Sun Oil Company, was the major participant in the Conwell group during the merger negotiations. His role certainly established him as a founder of the merged institution along with Dr. Harold J. Ockenga and the Rev. Billy Graham. His personal commitment was to conservative causes and orthodox faith. With this understanding and commitment, he was willing to direct substantial financial gifts to the institution, specifically, one-third of the operating costs of the institution in perpetuity. The operating costs were determined as those costs resulting from the difference between tuition and gift income and the cost of institutional operations. For the first five years of the merged institution he committed approximately \$175,000 per year. In practice, this stabilized the differentiated cost of operations in the vicinity of \$500,000 and determined the annual need for gift income. The institution was able to handle the inflationary costs of operations through the increased revenue that resulted from the rapid increase in student enrollment.

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Within two years of the merger, Mr. Pew passed away without formalizing the agreements through indentured documents at the Trusts. However, his successors at the Trusts, including the board, maintained the agreement in the light of the available documentation and the understanding of all persons involved. There was no question as to Mr. Pew's intentions and these were sustained by ongoing support.

In 1980, the executive director of the Trusts had informed Dr. Ockenga that a new understanding of the agreement would be implemented: the Trusts would now provide one-third of operational costs on a delayed one-year basis, based upon the actual unfunded operational costs of the prior year. This indicated that the Trusts were beginning to modify the original understanding, and Dr. Ockenga accepted this modification independent of the board of trustees.

During my first year in the president's office (1981-1982), I was invited by the Trusts' leaders to come to Philadelphia and visit with the grants committee of the Trusts. I discovered that the committee had further interest in developing a new relationship with the seminary reflecting further modifications in their support. They expressed their willingness to continue to finance the institution until it could stabilize its program of revenue and expense. There was considerable dissatisfaction with the annual reporting process, and I was encouraged to institute a development function and the search for a broader base of institutional support. I was also encouraged to expand the annual reports to the Trusts to inform them of our institutional progress.

In 1985, the executive director of the Trusts had further conversations with me regarding the funding program for the seminary. In May 1985, the Trusts informed me that they were looking forward to a time in the immediate future when their support for the institution would cease. As a result of a series of conversations, it was agreed that the seminary would become serious in its development of a formal program of institutional advancement. This would be demonstrated through the seminary's formation of a full development program and the launching of a capital campaign. As part of the capital campaign, funds would be solicited for the establishment of an endowment fund with annual earnings that would replace the annual grant from the Trusts. At the same time, capital construction would focus on the needed academic center and seminary housing. Income from the housing would further serve as auxiliary income to the annual budget.

Once the capital campaign plan was designed and approved by the board of trustees, it was then presented to The Pew Charitable Trusts and its board of

directors. The plan was accepted and the Trusts' board committed a gift of \$5 million to the capital construction portion of the program. These funds were designated for the academic center and were fundamental to the completion of that project. The important element in all this, beyond establishing a fundraising program, was the shift in position regarding endowment funds. J. Howard Pew did not believe in endowment funds and, therefore, his understanding of the merger included the prohibition of such funds. Consequently, the seminary had no endowment fund but only a small fund functioning as an endowment. These new negotiations resulted in the Trusts' willingness for the seminary to establish a formal endowment fund in order to secure the ongoing revenue needs of the institution.

The design of the capital campaign provided for the establishment of a traditional development function with an annual fund, an office, donor solicitations, prospects, and a variety of reports and celebrations. The board engaged in a leadership phase to attempt to raise 60 percent of the goal prior to public announcement. The major discussion on the part of the board was the amount of the goal. Their discussion moved the goal from \$9 million to \$15 million to \$18 million. By the time the leadership phase was completed, \$19 million had been raised. The board then increased the goal to \$28 million. The final result of the first phase of the capital campaign was \$29 million. Major gifts were received from trustees, foundations, and a select group of institutional donors, and an emerging donor community became evident and has continued to provide the basis for ongoing development formation.

Other results of the capital campaign were significant. A development office with personnel was fully established. This included a donor reporting system, programs for communication and ceremonial purposes, and the development of younger persons as experienced fundraisers. The endowment fund was established with significant gifts, but not at a level that would replace the annual Pew grant. More work was needed on this part of the capital campaign project. The building construction included three seminary apartment buildings (110 apartments) and the new 40,000-square-foot academic center. The center was designed to accommodate emerging learning technologies, eight different teaching environments, the housing of the Ockenga Institute, the continuing and extension education division, and a few faculty offices. The building costs exceeded the grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. Funds functioning as endowment were used to complete the construction, but they were not sufficient to equip the building. This need remains to this day and is a part of the current capital campaign.

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The major ceremonial events during the capital campaign broadened the exposure of the institution to its publics. Because the centennial of both Conwell and Gordon occurred during this period, various public events were planned. These included academic symposia, special events, and a large Founders' Day dinner in downtown Boston, which two thousand persons attended, giving significant notice to the seminary throughout the region. These events gave the seminary a broader exposure in the world of theological education and the church. This capital development stage gave me a marvelous opportunity to develop a close working relationship with the board and the major donors of the institution. Attitudes and spirits were extremely high and progressive. The work of the school was moving forward in terms of resource development and the building of a strong financial foundation for the institution. Financial stability would soon be realized.

The second characteristic of this phase was program formation and the expansion of our educational efforts, which can be best understood in the light of three elements: enrollment management, increase in degree programs, and faculty formation.

Student enrollment reached its peak during the first year of my presidency. National trends and demographics were beginning to manifest themselves and the decline in the number of students enrolling for the Master of Divinity degree program had begun. Second-career students were on the increase, including the arrival of families on the campus. Students were tending to register for fewer courses per term and, therefore, the seminary community was becoming more part-time than one characterized by full-time students. The number of women students was steadily increasing toward the 25 percent mark which has been more or less sustained in recent years. This shift in community demographics called for a new response and a new set of support services.

Enrollment management was not fully understood by the faculty. It was feared that the institution would become "market driven" rather than "ministry driven." But it was evident that if we did not become progressive in the handling of our campus support services for students and aggressive in the search for students, we would be confronted with a major decline in student enrollments. A marketing study was commissioned which resulted in the establishment of marketing strategies. The study influenced our public relations as well as our administrative support services, even though held in suspicion by some members of the seminary community.

It was evident that if these new efforts were to succeed we needed a person who understood enrollment management and its impact on a total institutional program. A careful search was launched, an experienced person was secured,

and a formal department of enrollment management was established. The immediate impact of this professional effort resulted in a turnaround in the enrollment decline, an increase in campus awareness of support services, and a more aggressive image of the institution in our worldwide public relations and student recruitment activity. Early success in this area permitted greater integration of enrollment management with the other concerns of the institution. These details must await the next part of this story.

The major degree program of the seminary was the Master of Divinity. There was a Master of Theological Studies available for the few students who were interested in a program that would not lead to ordination. Ninety-three percent of the student body was enrolled in the basic program. As enrollments in the M.Div. program began to decline, new interests were evident on the part of matriculating students. The situation clearly needed to be studied and additional specialized degree offerings designed.

The major catalyst in this effort was new academic leadership. A new vice president for academic affairs and dean of the seminary was employed after a two-year search. A person of considerable ecclesiastical, educational, and global experience, the dean's personality enabled him to gain support and to move the revision efforts forward.

New program specialties were recognized in the areas of family ministry, youth ministries, counseling, doctor of ministry, church music, and other areas. We moved from two degree offerings to 11 degree programs. This increase in academic programs enabled the student recruiters to expand their market efforts, and the entering classes began to increase. The diversity of academic programs introduced new issues within the faculty and ignited the current debate that centers around academic theology and the education for ministry. From the standpoint of the institution, the increased student body has sustained the viability of the school and has increased its efficiency in serving the churches and their needs. On the other hand, it has not settled the discussion regarding the nature of theological education, its definition, and its central focus. This is the issue that is central to the current phase of my presidential leadership.

It should be mentioned that during this time of program formation there was a constant effort to alert the faculty to emerging learning technologies. The new academic center underscored this theme and various workshops were conducted to increase faculty awareness of the subject. A faculty computer program was implemented and various plans were established for incorporating diverse technologies in the learning and scholarly enterprise. The foundation has been established but the superstructure is a matter of current concern.

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The most important developments during this period have to do with faculty formation. The faculty numbered approximately 25 full-time professors, some of whom were from the Gordon Divinity School faculty and other persons hired during the student growth years of the 1970s. Only two professors joined the school from the Conwell faculty. By the mid-1980s all members of the Gordon Divinity School faculty were near or had reached retirement age. During this period 10 faculty members were to retire. Their years of service ranged from 20 to nearly 50. This long service reflects faculty stability as well as strong tradition and entrenchment.

The vice president for academic affairs and I, along with the Faculty Personnel Policies Committee, began to plan for replacing retiring faculty and hiring new faculty. We believed it best to work through the formal process of decision-making regarding faculty selection and appointments. Our goal was to establish, through replacements, a faculty of younger persons who would be in tune with the emerging student community and global issues. We also realized that we would be losing considerable faculty experience through retirements and, therefore, we needed mature faculty leadership.

Some of the needed faculty leadership would emerge from those faculty members who had been employed during the 1970s. These persons would now become the senior faculty and would carry on the perspectives and traditions of the passing group. In order to influence this possibility, it was agreed—as a result of the capital campaign and the ability to secure endowment funds—to establish academic chairs for the purpose of securing distinguished professors.

This twofold strategy resulted in the employment of 11 younger persons with superb academic credentials who represent the current issues in culture and society. At the same time, they do not bring with them the depth of ecclesiastical or ministerial experience provided by the retiring faculty group. Their interests tend to be more professional, individual, and academic, with less focus on institutional and student development opportunities. The development of faculty community and ethos remains as a challenge.

The growing endowment fund has made possible the addition of five distinguished professors as recipients of named academic chairs. These persons bring considerable experience to the seminary in all phases of ministry and scholarship. The anticipated mature leadership and wisdom has been realized, and this group serves as a stabilizing force in the ongoing discussions and faculty conversations. At the same time, their stature has invited considerable institutional attention, has enhanced student recruitment, and provides for global platforms of ministry and representation.

1992-Present: Financial Stabilization and Institutional Reshaping

The third stage of my presidency was inaugurated with issues and opportunities of the decade of the 1990s. The winds of change that were blowing during the prior decade have now accelerated to a tremendous force, carrying with them the possibility of erosion and dramatic shift. As I have reflected on these winds of change, I have concluded that if they are resisted, only destruction and disaster will result. On the other hand, if we set our institutional sails with these winds, we can make dramatic progress toward fulfilling the mission of the institution. This attitude has governed our response.

This period of my presidency began with an expanded meeting of the board of trustees in January 1992. With the aid of special studies and documentation prepared by the President's Cabinet, which was joined by the chairs of the faculty divisions, the board gave considerable time to evaluating possible directions for the fiscal management of the institution.

The board considered several options. The downsizing of the entire institution was one possible approach. This model would reduce the seminary to an operation in Hamilton only, with an approximate student community of 450. By unanimous vote the board set this option aside as not in keeping with its vision or sense of purpose.

Another model for rightsizing the institution by modifying the Hamilton and Boston programs was considered. Its merits were attractive to many, especially those not fully committed to our expanded urban ministerial educational program. This model would modify the expanded program in continuing and extension education, and some of the degree programs would be eliminated. Such a rightsizing would have reduced expenses and eliminated a few positions, but would have maintained the institutional mission and viability.

The board concluded its meeting with an enthusiastic commitment to a third model of cost containment and distribution of resources. This model allowed for some downsizing in certain sectors of the institution, rightsizing of others, and the distribution of Hamilton resources to expanding programs in Boston, Massachusetts, and Charlotte, North Carolina.

Undergirding this third option and final decision was a plan that would lead to financial stability. Its first element involved the institution becoming debt-free, which was accomplished in May 1992.

The second priority was to expand the endowment fund to produce earnings over which the board would exercise discretionary authority. The endowment fund, through aggressive activity, has been increased to \$25 million. The

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third priority was given to cost containment and this has been handled through a carefully monitored budget formation and control process. The first budget under this newly designed system has resulted in a small surplus in annual operations. Many areas of the seminary continue to operate understaffed and with inadequate equipment and supplies. However, the control of expenditures has enabled a strengthening of the fiscal condition of the seminary and a strong economic foundation for the reshaping of the educational and administrative processes.

The determination of excess resources is now underway. It is envisioned that these will be distributed for service in Boston and Charlotte. The student communities in both locations are expanding, and it is anticipated that with an increase in courses and degree programs additional students will join in study and ministerial formation.

Personnel changes were implemented in order to have an academic dean in Hamilton, an executive dean in Charlotte, and an executive dean in Boston. With the redistribution of our resources and the expansion of these two additional campus programs, we realized that more particular leadership would be needed than what could be provided by a single person at the Hamilton site.

Also, the educational programs needed detailed scrutiny and a cost evaluation. Issues of mission must always dominate, but economic concerns are never far behind. The financial viability of each program must be evaluated carefully and hard decisions made. The first effort toward this end was quite unsuccessful. A faculty committee was appointed to review the Master of Divinity degree curriculum. After one year of work, this committee recommended only minor changes and adjustments; none of the recommendations provided much hope for sound fiscal management. It was agreed that the committee should be continued with greater involvement of the administration, particularly the president, in addressing the hardest issues and decisions.

We decided on a strategy of using consultants—persons who would be neutral in their institutional loyalty and vision, and yet frank and precise in their evaluation of our educational programs and efforts toward cost containment. The Learning Systems Group of Denver, Colorado, was secured for this purpose and engaged in an institution-wide study and review. Their methodology has included on-campus work as well as off-campus sessions with graduates of the past five years. Their findings focused on faculty workload; the number, nature, and sequence of course offerings; course schedules; and the institutional faculty support system for ministerial formation. They reported their findings to the board of trustees in January 1994 and then engaged the faculty in a year-long

study toward reshaping the institutional programs. It is anticipated that significant resources will be defined which then can be distributed to Boston and Charlotte to serve growing student populations there. There will be a reduction in degree program categories and more focused administration and greater integration of support services.

Although the major efforts toward financial stability will be found in reshaping the educational program, increased revenues and resources for the seminary will be necessary. Toward this end, the board of trustees has inaugurated phase two of the capital campaign with a goal of \$37 million. The leadership phase of the campaign has now been completed with \$20 million in funds raised. A public announcement has been made and a two-year campaign is underway toward the completion of the goal. The focus of the campaign is twofold: addressing deferred maintenance and building renewal needs, and increasing the endowment fund. The newly developed fundraising program and youthful leadership that has been employed are poised to provide successful leadership in this phase-two campaign.

The Park Street Church community has joined with the Center for Urban Ministerial Education to form Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary—Boston. This union is expanding our understanding of urban ministerial education beyond the needs and opportunities of inner-city multi-ethnic communities. Added now to the student community are persons from the marketplace, the universities, and international persons. It is envisioned that Boston will provide a comprehensive urban program of theological education. In Charlotte, a vision for parish-based pastoral education has emerged in which a mentored ministry model, wherein each student works in partnership with a seasoned pastor, is the cornerstone of the Master of Divinity curriculum.

A vision for classical theological education at the Hamilton campus seeks to link its positive contributions with the demands of contemporary ministry. Here the intentional development of a residential community of learning fosters an environment of depth in scholarly inquiry and of breadth in academic integrative reflection. The Ockenga Institute will increase its services for lay and continuing education through on-campus short courses, special events, and interactive distance learning.

The Board of Trustees and the President

My most satisfying experiences as president come from my relationships with the board of trustees. This has been a growing satisfaction as we have

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worked together in providing leadership to the institution. This strong relationship with the board has helped to give me a sense of confidence and identity in the office of president.

This confidence in office has made it possible for me to keep the board members focused on our institutional mission and its successful fulfillment. Trustees have a great appetite for information and understanding. At no time have the trustees intruded into the management or the day-to-day decision-making at Gordon-Conwell. They have granted me full authority to establish my own administrative team and with that team to manage the institution. In developing the team, I have followed the guiding principle to “lead with my strength, and staff to my weakness.” The same confidence that the board has extended to me, I have in turn sought to extend to my senior administrators.

The professional side of the board/president relationship is much more demanding than the personal dimension. These two aspects call for clarification.

The formal relationship of the president to the board is not well-defined in our institutional documents or in board practice. The bylaws that govern the seminary were those that had guided the Gordon College and Gordon Divinity School. They contain the usual articles dealing with such items as meetings, voting procedures, election of trustees, board officers, and committees. The article on committees provides a key insight into the structure of the board of trustees. Only two committees are called for: the Executive Committee and the Nominating Committee. All other committees are assumed under a third section calling for “other committees.”

The essential leadership of the board is provided by the Executive Committee. In many respects, this is a board within the board. The board and the Executive Committee are chaired by different persons. The Executive Committee is made up of several persons living in and near New England which enables the committee to meet on a regular basis apart from the three meetings of the board of trustees. The Nominating Committee carries the essential responsibility for who shall be nominated for the board of trustees. The Executive Committee has appointed other committees such as fiscal affairs, operations, academic affairs, student affairs, and financial development.

The bylaw statement regarding the president is brief. It states, “The president shall be the chief executive officer. Subject to the directions of the board, he shall have general charge and supervision of the affairs of the corporation. He shall, from time to time, make such reports of the affairs of the corporation as the board may require and shall annually present to the annual meeting of the board

his report of the conduct of the affairs of the corporation during the preceding fiscal year.”

This provision gives executive authority to the president, but it provides little instruction regarding the role and responsibilities of the president. Recognizing this, I have developed three practices in my relationship with the board of trustees: (1) I have maintained a close working relationship with the Executive Committee and its chair. I seek counsel from this group on difficult issues, and I report significant matters to this group on a regular basis. (2) I have maintained a casual relationship with the chair of the board of trustees, putting emphasis mainly upon mission and vision issues as well as the planning for each of the three meetings of the board of trustees. The board chair is invited to participate with me in ceremonial and public occasions. (3) This relationship between the board and the Executive Committee structures the manner in which I organize with the trustees the work of the board. All matters of institutional mission and vision, personnel decisions, and the budget are directed to the full board of trustees at any of its regular meetings. Matters that relate to the ongoing management, fiscal affairs, and issues of discipline or public relations are handled at any of the regular meetings of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee sessions tend to be informal and provide an opportunity for consultation, planning, and reporting. I have attempted to avoid having the Executive Committee make decisions involving personnel, budget, and mission, which would deprive the full board of its responsibilities and accountability for institutional direction. This strategy seems to have worked well.

In 1985 the Executive Committee undertook a process of bylaw revision for the purpose of reflecting more accurately the newly established institutional organization and administrative structure. I was instructed to design a set of bylaws that would reflect the current institutional structure and to submit it to the Executive Committee, which would serve as a committee on bylaw revision. After the study of several other seminary bylaws and with the assistance of the recommended bylaws from the Association of Governing Boards, I prepared a draft document for submission in May 1986. These revised bylaws cover the powers and responsibilities of trustees and officers, and procedures for meetings. An expanded statement on committees envisioned a new board structure in which there would be three major committees: Academic Affairs, Fiscal Affairs, and Institutional Advancement. Three other committees—the Executive Committee, a Committee on Trustees, and a Committee on the President—complete the committee structure of the board. It was anticipated that the three

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major committees would appoint subcommittees dealing with specific responsibilities such as investments, audit, and institutional mission. These bylaws envisioned a smaller Executive Committee with the empowerment of the full and duties of the president. It includes the full range of responsibilities and issues of accountability, in addition to the establishment of authority.

This draft of the bylaws was submitted to the board of trustees for a first reading and numerous revisions were suggested. In the intervening period, the Executive Committee has been hesitant to move forward with the bylaws until more recently when there is a readiness now to finalize this board structure. I believe there is a growing awareness on the part of the board leadership that now is the time to give more formal structure to that which has been handled more informally and through personal relationships. This informal/formal nature of board organization has been one of the ambiguities that I have sustained in the office of president. The informality has allowed the board members to come together in a collegial spirit and with demonstrated harmony. At the same time, the board has exercised significant leadership for the institution, and there is no question as to their role and contribution.

The professional dimension of the board/president relationship has been possible given these informalities, because I have given considerable effort to building personal relationships with each trustee. Personal visits to each trustee's home or place of work have provided opportunities for conversations about them and their interests, as well as conversations on institutional issues, fundraising, institutional representation, and numerous other topics. The interpersonal dimension of the board has been strengthened through this approach.

It is fair to say that the board's expectation is for a legitimate presidency with full institutional authority and with personal accountability to the board. It seems to me that we have kept our central focus on institutional mission and priorities, and have avoided issues that would have provoked internal conflict and disharmony. This does not mean that we have avoided conflict or hard issues, but rather have addressed issues in the context of our institutional mission and respect for one another. This has enabled me to present both "good" news and "bad" news. Two additional matters remain for a fuller understanding of board/president relationship: the care and working conditions of the president and the president as educator of the board.

First, the care and working conditions of the president. The board addresses these through its Committee on the President. The committee was established during my first year in office and at my request. Given the special context of the institution, its history of faculty roles, and the relative newness of the board, I felt

that I would need such a committee for short-term evaluation purposes. It was decided that the committee would meet each time the full board was in session and this would allow for ongoing conversation of evaluation, concern, and care to emerge. This schedule of meetings has been maintained to this present day.

The purpose of the committee was to provide the board the opportunity to evaluate presidential leadership and, at the same time, to give the president an opportunity to evaluate and make suggestions regarding the work of the board. Further, the committee had responsibility for handling the president's working conditions, compensation, time management, health concerns, family needs, and other personal issues that might arise. The committee reports to the full board during regular sessions as the final item on the agenda. This reporting is done in executive session and, upon completion of the report and discussion, I am invited to return to the room for any comment if needed. Otherwise, the chair of the board reports to me fully after the meeting on any matters of concern or decision.

I have found the work of the committee and this system of communication to the full board to work extremely well. It has provided a formal way for me to address issues on a regular basis. The early years of the committee's work found focus in evaluating my leadership and the institutional response. This was very important as we restructured the institutional organization and reshaped the administration and operations. In more recent years, the work of the committee has shifted from matters of leadership style to matters of a more personal agenda relating to working conditions, compensation, and personal priorities.

Members of the committee are extremely pastoral, and I have been at liberty to consult with the chair of this committee who functions as "my pastor." This procedure for handling presidential concerns has allowed the board chair/presidential relationship to focus on matters of board and institutional business. Personal issues have not intruded into this relationship and this has allowed for a clarity of role and responsibility.

The Committee on the President was instrumental in recommending to the board that an executive benefit plan be established for me on the condition that I would commit myself to a long term of service, at least until I reach 65 years of age. We have satisfactorily entered into such a benefit plan. The committee also expressed concern for my finding adequate time for study, reading, and reflection. In 1990, it was agreed that I should take a three-month sabbatical and that I should design a plan that would provide for an annual study leave thereafter.

It is fair to say that the Committee on the President has played a crucial role in providing me with a regular trustee group for expressions of concern about

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the work of the board, the responsibilities of particular trustees, and the handling of sensitive issues apart from the Executive Committee or the full board. The board/president relationship has been made strong through the very special care of the Committee on the President.

The second remaining issue on the board/president relationship is that of being educator to the board. I have sought to fulfill this responsibility through two lines of action: issues in theological education and board development through trustee education.

Trustees expect the president to instruct them on the emerging issues in theological education and the life of the seminary. These issues range from theoretical matters regarding the nature and purpose of theological education to developments within church and society. As part of my regular report to the board, which is a feature of each meeting of the board of trustees, I identify an issue and highlight its nature and impact on the seminary. In addition to this form of education, I select from time to time news articles, feature stories from magazines, and other printed pieces that highlight current issues. These are sent once a month along with the regular memo to trustees. On occasion, I have arranged for speakers, including members of the faculty, to address the board on critical themes of current interest. This variety of activity seems to have satisfied the need for trustee education and awareness concerning contemporary issues.

My major effort as educator of the board has been through the planning and leading of special programs in trustee education to develop in board members self-understanding of the role and nature of trusteeship. This has been an extremely satisfying activity. The format for trustee education includes: membership in the Association of Governing Boards, two specially designed programs covering both our own history and purpose as well as our cooperation with similar institutions, and a two-year study of the book, *The Effective Board of Trustees*, by Chait, Holland, and Taylor. I have also attempted to engage at least one trustee at a time in special workshops and seminars, and I have developed an orientation for new trustees.

The success of the trustee education program has convinced me that there must always be an ongoing educational program. Such a program, built into the regular ethos and life of the board, can be an instrument toward increasing knowledge, forming attitudes, and developing skills that are so essential in trusteeship. Trustees receive much more from the institution through such a program than just the privilege of attending meetings and making decisions. They become better informed and more sensitive in matters essential to theo-

logical education. Also, I have learned that much that is gained in these trustee educational sessions have been transferred to other board memberships and associations. This transfer of learning has been an important value for the trustees. Throughout the years of my presidential service I have come to understand that my effectiveness is founded on this successful relationship with the board of trustees.

Governance and the Presidential Role

Institutional governance cannot be done alone! I have come to understand institutional governance to be a process whereby the interests of the board, the faculty, and the administration are balanced and authorized. Governance is a cooperative action that allows each institutional structure to maintain its own role and responsibility. Governance differs from authority and depends on the skill and insights of all persons involved in the process. The board of trustees has final and complete authority; however, functional authority is granted to the faculty in matters of curriculum and professional prerogatives.

The process of governance at Gordon-Conwell follows fairly standard institutional designs and is articulated in handbooks, manuals, and policy guidelines. It is important to reflect on the relationship of the president to each of the structures active within the governance process. The beneficiaries of the governance process, the students, also need to be mentioned in terms of their special interests.

The Board

The interests of the trustees in the governance process have been best served through two primary means: regular communications and the procedural handling of policies, plans, and issues. I have maintained a monthly memorandum to trustees for the past 15 years. This information keeps the board members fully informed on the activities of the school and on particular issues and studies within the faculty, the student body, and the administration. The president's report in each board meeting also features important background information for the handling of recommended policies and strategic plans. Special reports are referred to the trustees in ample time before being placed on a meeting agenda. This allows for informal conversations and inquiries to take place in advance, which has served the more formal board discussions well.

The procedural handling of policies, plans, and institutional issues follows standard rules of order. Policies or recommendations handled by the faculty or

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the administration are channeled through appropriate executive divisions to the president. These are then referred to board committees that frame the final recommendations to the full board. My task has been to orchestrate at all levels the movement of these matters, seeing that all interests have been addressed and that proper concerns are reflected in the work.

The governance procedures fit well into the design of any board meeting. Each meeting has a time for fellowship and interpersonal development, education, action, and decision-making. When an action is required of the board, time is afforded for the matter to be presented, discussed, and referred for further evaluation, discussion, or additional work prior to a decision. Decision-making is when the board exercises its final authority to vote on a policy, recommendation, or issue. Any one of the four segments of a board meeting allows for institutional matters to be addressed in one manner or another. I have discovered that most governance issues can be handled with ease and precision by being patient to allow the fullest sense of ownership to emerge and to see that all dimensions of an issue are fully explored. My hardest moments come when recommendations or policies are being forced through the system with a sense of urgency. I have learned that such urgent matters should be handled with the Executive Committee rather than through the normal board procedures, which tends to underscore the emergency nature and urgency of the issue.

The Faculty

Much has been written about presidential relationships with faculty and the institutional process. I have discovered that faculty members are indeed “individualists,” but it is a wonderful moment when they blend their talents and skills together to make a decision, a plan, or a policy in the best interests of the institution toward the fulfillment of the school’s stated mission. Faculty members must be respected for their role in the governance process, even as they need to be aware that the president serves as the agent of the board and that final authority resides in that relationship. The president’s vision for the institution can only be realized through the fullest cooperation and ownership of that vision by the faculty. I have discovered that the president leads through persuasion for a voluntary response.

I have described the circumstances of my initial introduction to the faculty as somewhat unsatisfactory. Because the faculty historically had strong decision-making authority in the institution, I was viewed, I suspect, as intrusive and contrary to their best interests. Once the executive division of academic affairs was established, it became clear that the broader educational issues and needs

would be handled through this division. The faculty, as a distinct structure in the organizational plan, reported directly to the president and in turn to the board of trustees. This relationship then defined the position of vice president for academic affairs and dean of the seminary. This person was the executive administrator of academic affairs (admissions, registrar, library, etc.) and functioned as the administrator of faculty processes and policies. This design established the *governance process* from faculty action to dean to president to the board of trustees. The *authority line* was from faculty to president to board of trustees. In keeping with this design, I chair the regular monthly faculty meetings, while the dean and faculty prepare the agenda and supporting documentation. The key to this system of governance is the relationship established between the president and the vice president for academic affairs or academic dean.

Finally, regarding faculty, I would make three further observations. The work of the faculty should never be interrupted to accomplish tasks that can be done by administrators or members of the staff. Also, the requirement to attend meetings should always be on the basis that such meetings are meaningful and faculty have an important contribution to make. And, finally, all areas of decision-making should be open to faculty interests and expression, and their ownership of important institutional policies and plans should always be sought. These final reflections, I believe, are absolutely essential to undergirding the faculty's respect for the office of the president and for the governance process.

I have great appreciation for the faculty's collective dedication and service to the seminary community, and I have much respect for their individual scholarship and teaching skills. This is a distinguished group of educators.

The President

The role of the president in a shared governance system is that of a "gate keeper." Relationships among institutional governance structures are, at best, always strained. Tensions can be created out of narrow viewpoints, territorial interests, and a lack of understanding of authority and accountability. Central to this ubiquitous system of decision-making is the office of the president. It is that office that maintains order in the process, initiates major policy and program formation, and serves as the single access point to the board of trustees. Beyond these procedural and authority concerns of the president, if the "gate-keeping" role is to be maximized, the president must be in regular communication with the seminary community. I know that board members want to be

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informed of campus opinion, viewpoints, and individual positions. Accountability to the board depends in large measure upon the president's successful performance as "gate keeper" in the governance process.

I have also discovered that within the governance process the integrity of the president can be jeopardized. The erosion of integrity can be a by-product of leadership style, intimacy with the policy planning and formulation process, and through efforts toward collegial relationships. In my early days as president I spoke frequently and openly about concerns, offering my reflections and opinions. Little did I realize that statements made in a casual moment would come to be stated as positions of the president in various campus conversations. Conflicting understandings of the president's position or direction resulted in a shifting perception of presidential integrity. Once I formalized access to the president and changed certain practices, I discovered that positions of integrity could be maintained, increasing respect for the office of the president. Seldom, I have learned, is the president permitted to change positions, to show flexibility, or to have a moment of indecision without confusion becoming the result.

Finally, when controversies or conflicts arise, the best approach is one of patience. Patience allows time for the president to become fully informed, and when it is necessary to speak or to make a decision, outcomes are viewed with greater integrity and respect. The avoidance of personalizing issues or conflicts further strengthens the integrity and position of the president's office.

The president's role in the governance process must also be understood in terms of the service provided by the administrative team. Administrators have authority that is delegated to them by the president. Therefore, their tasks and responsibilities are interwoven with the president's role in the decision-making system. This system is enhanced as the three vice presidents meet with me on a weekly basis. The meetings provide an opportunity to review their plans, discuss important issues, and share matters of mutual benefit. They are also a time to recognize excellent decisions, evidence of progress, and successful outcomes to planning and performance. The weekly meetings are an important routine, but we also know that we can communicate at a moment's notice when needed. In addition, once each academic year the administrative team and I take a three-day retreat for the purposes of goal setting, reflection, and team-building activity.

Each vice president understands clearly his responsibilities in the governance process and represents me well within the system. I have extended to each one the full authority to make decisions predicated on the ongoing conversations and information shared with me. When there is a difference of opinion

regarding a decision, it is always handled in private, immediately, with effort toward correction or clarification. I have sought to give equal importance to each person and his executive assignment, believing that the three broad areas of administration are best served through this sense of equality and unity.

In working with the administrative team I have found it important to emphasize leadership development. The need for ongoing administrative staff persons is acute, and the best training ground is within the context of the seminary and its administration and staff. Younger persons have been identified for special positions in the hope that with careful tutelage and mentoring, they can emerge as candidates for senior administrative positions. This effort in leadership development extends throughout the seminary community.

If the president is to be effective in the governance process, administrative associates can never be taken for granted. Their loyalty is as important as their professional skill and personal vision. The bimonthly President's Cabinet meeting is the opportunity to develop the team spirit that must undergird the presidential vision.

The Students

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary does not have a tradition of students being formally involved in the governance process beyond serving on a few selected committees. Because students by their very nature are short-term residents of the learning community and have limited investment in the long-term development of the institution, I believe it is best that they not have a formal position or representation in seminary governance. On the other hand, it should never be forgotten that they are the beneficiaries of a well-designed and implemented governance process. It is for their sake and their development that such governance structures exist.

One of the greatest disappointments of my presidency to date is the limited amount of time available for personal relationships with students. In coming to the seminary, I had hoped to teach at least one course each semester to maintain an active communication with students. This has not been possible given the heavy demands and schedule of my office. Therefore, my student contacts are limited to occasions such as daily chapel, meal functions, and casual contact on campus. I have always made it a practice to accommodate a student's request for an appointment, and any student's written communication receives an immediate response with a follow-up if needed. In this way, I hope to demonstrate my interest in student affairs.

The President and the Publics

Now I turn attention to the external community and the role of the president. The involvement of the external community in the life of the seminary was absolutely essential if the school was to develop its resources and have appropriate partnerships in service and ministry. The keys to this external community are visibility and representation.

After considerable study, evaluation, and reflection, I concluded that the seminary in the truest sense did not have an external constituency. I understand constituency to mean a formally organized group that has decision-making responsibilities and accountability standards for an institution such as a seminary. No denomination or organization owns or operates Gordon-Conwell. The school is a freestanding institution with a board of trustees that has final authority and can remain in existence in perpetuity. No external group can influence the policy formation of the seminary in terms of legislation or voting authority. Such authority resides solely with the board of trustees and the faculty. Therefore, it seems wise to limit the term “constituency” to this small group of persons who are actively engaged in fulfilling the mission of the school. Everyone else can be considered as a “public.” Students have no formal input into the institutional legislative or governance process other than the power of persuasion or through personal response. Once students graduate from the seminary and join the Alumni/ae Association, they identify with an ecclesiastical judicatory or organization. And in that sense they belong to a constituency other than the seminary. So, even as members of the alumni/ae group, former students are considered a public of the seminary.

All such possible public groups were carefully evaluated and placed into one of three categories: external public, internal public, and religiously oriented public. These three categories were further subdivided to encompass in total 52 different publics. Each public group requires a particular strategy for communication and relationship. Identification and understanding of these various publics allows the seminary to frame its communications and responses in appropriate ways. It also enables the board and the faculty, as constituencies, to make important decisions as they relate to the operation of the seminary and the nature of its mission and vision. The vast external community is essentially our “publics,” and this variety of groups allows for flexibility, success-oriented communication, and more visionary representation.

The seminary has identified a narrow theological stance around which its constituency can unite. The twin doctrines of Scripture and Christology are

matters of commitment of all constituents. Beyond this core of unity, there is a range of diversity in theological commitment, ecclesiastical polity, and lifestyle, often leading to competing visions of theological education. In these areas institutional policy formation tends to govern structures and practice, and the wide range of expressions usually found within the evangelical movement can be identified. It is quite possible to add a third core value to those of Scripture and Christology—evangelism and world missions. It is these core values that have anchored the institution within its identity and that undergird the formation of institutional values that have been expressed in positions of diversity and practice.

This understanding of institutional culture has influenced presidential relationships with the publics in three ways. First, given the fact that the evangelical movement is quite fragmentary and has many faces, I have learned that the combination of unity and diversity establishes well the centrist theological position of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Its unity factors identify it with the historic evangelical movement. Its understanding of diversity enables the seminary to embrace a wide range of people, organizations, and viewpoints.

Second, partnerships have been established with a diverse group of churches. As a freestanding seminary, no single group of churches has been particularly identified through partnership, but rather a vast cross-section of American churches has been active in partnership with the seminary. This partnership includes historic Protestant groups as well as the large number of smaller denominations that have emerged during the 20th century. Partnerships have been established at the local congregational level, often quite dependent upon the senior pastor. These partnerships have been realized in financial support, exchange services, and opportunities for student internships.

Third, in the interpretation of the seminary to its diverse publics, I have been able to present the seminary from the standpoint of its evangelical unity but with its openness to diversity and variety. This has enabled the seminary to maintain its positions without the external pressure that can come from a constituency-based situation.

The school's Statement of Mission has been foundational to interpreting theological education at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. I have sought to advance the institutional mission by maintaining an active relationship with the seminary's external communities. This activity may best be described as "for the seminary" and "beyond the seminary."

The primary activity "for the seminary" has found focus in alumni/ae meetings. Given the history of the institution, the community of graduates can

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be identified in five groups with some overlapping: Gordon Divinity School graduates, The Brookline Center, the Wenham campus, the Conwell group of graduates and, of course, graduates of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Each of these groups has particular characteristics that require different responses.

In relating to the alumni/ae I have established meetings and opportunities to be together in a variety of ways. This includes gatherings of alumni/ae at national meetings, denominational judicatory sessions, and through alumni/ae meetings around the country.

Given the nature of the institution, relationships with denominations have been minimal and sporadic. I have attempted to have the seminary represented at denominational judicatory sessions when possible by arranging for a faculty member of that denomination to be present. Most often an alumni/ae reception or meeting is scheduled in conjunction with the meeting. I have attended a few such national gatherings and have brought greetings on behalf of the seminary. My major activity in relationship to the churches has found focus in Sunday preaching appointments with local congregations, more so early on in my presidency than in recent years. Church representation has been best fulfilled by using as many members of the seminary community as possible.

The best way I have discovered to establish relationships with others on behalf of the seminary is one-on-one in informal situations. These allow for a significant interpretation of the seminary to be made to a potential major donor and partner. I believe that the greatest amount of my activity in behalf of the seminary has been dedicated to fundraising. More will be said about this later.

The final activity "for the seminary" has to do with "town/gown" relationships. The seminary is situated in South Hamilton, a small bedroom community with a population of 7,000. Its history includes many influential families, and there are close-knit relationships within the community. The seminary at times can appear to be intrusive because it represents the largest public activity within the town. This has resulted in numerous encounters with various boards and leaders of the town. To foster relationships with the town's leaders, I have invited the Selectmen to the campus each spring for an evening dinner and conversation regarding the economic condition of the school. I have given considerable personal time to the development of one-on-one relationships within the town and have tried to make the campus facilities available for town use. I believe an acceptable relationship with the town has been established through constant communication and effort.

The above activities in behalf of the seminary are expected of the president. There are also many relationships with external communities that have been

personal choices of mine but in the interest of the seminary. They have resulted in strengthening the image and public relations of the school.

Fundraising and the President

I did not bring extensive background in fundraising to the seminary presidency, although I had shared in a variety of fundraising experiences and had been involved in the development of research funds at the university. My greatest asset was my association with college and university administrative teams in which fundraisers were present and active. I had observed their practice and participated in a variety of ways by incorporating the academic and educational dimensions. Beyond this, I had attended two workshops on fundraising and institutional development. These introduced me to the theoretical and ideological dimensions of the task. Now in the office of the president, I was confronted with my first genuine responsibility for raising funds on an annual basis.

The first phase of my presidency provided me with the opportunity to begin expanding the seminary's relationship to external publics. My very first effort was to establish a President's Council of business and professional persons. After reviewing the very limited donor list, 125 persons were identified as having some kind of ongoing interest in the seminary through regular gift giving. I decided that this would be the best group to challenge with the formation of the President's Council. A coordinating committee was established and three meetings were planned each year. The themes for these meetings centered around the application of biblical faith in the marketplace, and trends and movements within the life of the church and ministry. These church and society themes generated sufficient interest, and a faithful core group of 60 to 80 persons has maintained the council's activities in the intervening years. The council's major ongoing project is the development of the President's Council Endowment Fund for scholarships to underwrite the education of second-career students. Approximately \$6.5 million can be attributed to this group during the past decade.

The experience with the President's Council indicated that the seminary did have an appeal for the development of a donor-based community. A mail solicitation program was inaugurated and a donor record system was established. Through a combination of activities, a substantial donor base has been developed and the annual fund income has increased 500 percent.

At the beginning of the second phase of my presidency a formal office of development was instituted with a vice president for institutional advance-

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ment. While the development office was being formed and gaining its early experience, an assistant to the president was employed who was capable of working with me in the writing of foundation proposals and the procurement of grants. It was during this phase of the fundraising experience that the driving motif of our fundraising program was forged. We based our fundraising appeals on the basis of “success” rather than “need.” All our public appeals and presentations put forward the successes of the institution in terms of our mission and successful graduates.

The “success” motif focused the trustees’ attention on the institution’s mission and the possibilities of the future. When we centered our thoughts on “need,” we found ourselves dealing more with budgets, accounting records, and operational cutbacks. Success called for investment in the institution and the reaping of future rewards. Trustee giving and involvement increased dramatically, their example has influenced many, and they have been successful in adding new donors in the major gifts category. I am convinced that trustees are the core of any successful fundraising program.

I soon realized the potential for foundation support for the seminary. As a freestanding, non-sectarian institution, we were able to present proposals to numerous foundations and corporations that included such institutions in their philanthropy. The fact that the institution is debt-free and that the board of trustees has made a major commitment to the seminary underscores the appeal made to foundations.

The third phase of my presidency is directed toward the primary goal of financial stability and capital renewal. The vehicle to accomplish these goals is the second phase of the capital campaign—“Sharing the Vision.” Our plan is to increase the endowment funds and to address the deferred maintenance and capital renewal projects of the five oldest buildings. To date 65 percent of the fund goal of \$37.5 million has been realized. One of my great satisfactions in the presidency has been, and continues to be, the initiation of major resource development programs.

The Burdens of the President

One day as I was walking down a narrow street in the marketplace of Old Jerusalem, a poster on the wall of a small shop captured my immediate attention. Depicted on the poster was a Palestinian, bent over carrying a huge rock strapped to his back. At the bottom of the poster was inscribed the phrase “The Burden of Jerusalem.” The message was clear. The Palestinian single-handedly was carrying the tension, the weight of grief, and the sorrow of the Holy City.

That picture has often symbolized for me the burden of the president. There are weights of concern and stress that only the president can bear. I will give a brief sketch of several of these burdens.

The Burden of Initiative

In the final analysis the president alone carries the ultimate responsibility for the work of the institution. This work involves budget priorities, personnel selection, physical plant, programs, and planning. Even though I have carried the burden of initiative, in the final analysis I have come to realize that only the faculty can translate mission and vision statements into reality. It is essential, then, that faculty members be partners in the process and develop a sense of ownership.

The Burden of Accumulated Grievances

Throughout the course of my presidency I have had to make a number of difficult decisions regarding personnel and programs. These decisions had impact on the lives of faculty, staff, and administrators. In some instances, decisions needed to be made in favor of the institution and counter to the wishes of particular persons or departments. Such decisions usually result in feelings of hurt, disappointment, and even anger. The longer I maintain my presidency the more I am aware that such grievances accumulate. Further, I have discovered that even though I may not have direct responsibility for the creation of certain problems, they usually are attributed to the president, and at least to the administration.

The Burden of Ceremonies

I have come to understand the importance of celebrations and the performance of institutional ceremonies. They are opportunities to highlight the heritage and traditions of the seminary and to rekindle the sense of community. Usually the burden for such ceremonies fall upon the president's shoulders and are an opportunity to extend the presidential platform, but such planning and ceremonies seem to come at times when very demanding decisions are needed and are being made. This can add a burdensome aspect to what otherwise may be a joyful occasion.

The Burden of Loneliness

This burden was felt immediately upon my arrival in the office of the presidency, and the initial sense of loneliness has continued to be present

throughout these many years. Further, I have discovered that my feeling of loneliness is sustained on the assumption of many that the president is always busy and therefore should not be invited, included, or expected. Invitations to social occasions are rare, so my wife and I have sought to develop a community of friends beyond the seminary including some at a great distance. We have incorporated into our travels opportunities to share time with these friends and develop in this manner a way to nurture our social needs.

On the one hand, there is that constant sense of being alone, but students and employees rarely hesitate to telephone the residence during evening hours, on the weekends, and on holidays. We have encouraged this freedom of access. And, finally, I have discovered that as president I must always appear as though everything is all right with me, the family, and the institution when in reality there may be pressing issues and difficult situations present. Loneliness is a funny animal that needs to be tamed; otherwise, it can become a great burden.

The Burden of an Academic Discipline

Prior to coming to the office of the president, I was fully involved for 25 years in the academic discipline of archaeology. This was my training, my scholarship, and my classroom joy. In accepting the presidency it was my expectation, as well as that of the board of trustees, that I would be able to continue the discipline and have opportunity for classroom instruction. The heavy demands of administration, field representation, and problem solving have made this impossible, and therefore trying to maintain this personal interest has now become a burden.

The Burden of Mistakes

I have never been fearful of making mistakes. At times trial and error can be a good method for making progress. In the course of such progress, however, mistakes are made and these can become burdensome. In hindsight, some decisions regarding capital construction, certain personnel appointments, and a few policy decisions were mistakes, and have needed to be overcome.

The Burden of Contradictory Expectations

After arrival in the office of the president, I soon learned that seminary expectations were for immediate leadership and management. I was now considered to be the resident expert on all matters even though I was new to the institution and had little knowledge yet of its traditions and procedures. The president is to be available on campus to see people and to confer with them, to be present at committee meetings, to introduce persons at meetings, and to greet

all visitors to the campus. Beyond the campus, donors and other publics expect the president on various occasions to represent the school. The effort to balance these expectations can become an additional burden in the presidential task.

The Burden of Time

If not properly managed and controlled, time can become one of the greatest burdens to the president. Given the time-consuming activities that flow out of the office of the president, there is a very real danger that there will be no time for reflection or focus on the presidential task. The pace can be relentless, and one can quickly become exhausted. Managing one's time requires strong control of the office calendar, travel schedule, and the rate of institutional progress. My travel time gives me time for reading and reflection, and by joining airline clubs I am able to find sanctuary away from telephones and people for additional time in reflection and relaxation.

The Burden of Obsolescence

There are those moments in the life of an institution when an academic program or an administrative unit is no longer useful. Usually employees have vested interest in these areas. Someone needs to identify these areas as being obsolete and inaugurate change. That someone is usually the president. The responsibility to maintain institutional relevance and effectiveness means that obsolescence needs to be eliminated as a burden. "When the horse is dead, dismount."

If the above subject areas are not properly addressed, controlled, or handled, they can become weighty, unmanageable burdens. I have learned as president that none of these can be removed or eliminated but most can be controlled and managed.

Some Final Reflections

It is my deep conviction that there are three factors that determine an effective seminary president: first, the personal traits and attributes of the individual; second, the institutional context and culture in which the person serves; and third, the process by which presidents go about their tasks. An effective presidency depends upon the interaction of these three factors and how well the person understands their dynamic. The president makes the presidency what it is.

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But one also has to ask: What is the basis of presidential stability and long-term service? How is presidential leadership executed? What are the models for presidential leadership? As I examine my own term of service, now 15 years, I believe there are four significant reasons for my modest staying power.

Calling is first and foremost. There is that sense of being summoned and directed by God into ministry. The invitation of the board of trustees to provide the ministry of seminary leadership authenticates and authorizes my calling. Ministry in the office of the president finds meaning in serving others and relies fully upon God's grace.

My *wife*, Eileen, has been a major ingredient in my presidential longevity. Beyond the typical roles of a "first lady" she has brought unusual gifts and contributions to my ability to be president. Her special gifts of discernment have protected me on many occasions from wrong moves or decisions. Some of my mistakes are the direct result of not giving the fullest attention to her wise counsel and understanding. Feedback is another important contribution she has made to my presidential leadership—her willingness to listen as I expound daily on the issues and frustrations at hand. Her life and service as "first lady" grow out of her gracious understanding that she too has a calling to ministry and service to others.

The *support of the board of trustees* has enabled me to give stable and long presidential service. The trustees demonstrated early on and shortly after my appointment that they were solidly behind me. The role of the Committee on the President has been central in providing so much of this psychological and substantive support.

Finally, my *background experience* contributed to stable presidential service. Life in "service to others" is always filled with tension, frustrations, challenges, and opportunities. Because I had ample experience prior to my presidential appointment, such matters have not been newly discovered and realized. Indeed experience is a brutal teacher. And I have learned! I have learned!

A second question about presidential leadership is "How is presidential leadership executed?" Beyond the usual techniques of management, control, and leadership, there are other practical dimensions of presidential methodology to be considered. *Patience* is critical to maintaining shared governance and a sense of community. The role of *ambiguity* needs to be underscored. This is true in the realm of theology as well as the realm of governance. As mentioned earlier, the definition of tenure held by the board of trustees is quite different from the definition understood by the faculty. I have been comfortable to leave this matter unsettled and to allow the ambiguity to persist.

Process is extremely important to presidential leadership. Leadership is not a matter of barking orders and giving commands but rather enabling others to have courage to act. This action comes as a result of a process. Process has enabled me to balance the competing interests of each of the institutional structures.

And, finally, the role of *risk-taking* should be noted in presidential methodology. There are those moments, though rare, when the president must say, "This is the way, follow me." This requires a tremendous amount of risk and personal jeopardy. Such risk-taking must always be preceded by extensive pre-decision work and conversation. Being fully aware of diverse opinions and counsel, the president can come to a personal commitment and plan of action. Many significant achievements are made because of presidential risk-taking, but it requires confidence and a strong self-understanding.

The final question to be addressed is "What are the models for presidential leadership?" Scholars of presidential leadership have proposed such metaphors as mayor, prime minister, manager, or chief executive officer to describe the presidential model. Chief executive officer is used most often, an image of CEO taken from the corporate and business world. For me this underscores a system of hierarchical authority and a mission of profit. Management and control are the essence of executive leadership. It is true that aspects of these characteristics are manifested in presidential leadership but there is much more.

Biblical models of leadership have given me the most helpful mental portraits of the seminary presidency. There are four biblical images that lead to a greater understanding of presidential leadership: shepherd, steward, servant, and seer.

The biblical image of *shepherd* suggests a peaceful pastoral picture of a person who cares for the sheep. Shepherds loved their flocks, called the sheep by name, searched for the lost ones, and risked their lives to protect the flocks from predators and danger. The presidential life finds focus in a concern for the welfare of others—administrators, staff, faculty, students, alumni/ae, trustees, constituents, and publics. The president who is the shepherd of people will help them grow and empower others.

The biblical image of *steward* involves management and money. It is a powerful image of care and responsibility. The steward was one who acted on behalf of an owner, and this required the supervision of others and the management of products and money. This imagery is a powerful symbol for the presidential life of stewardship, care, and responsibility.

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The biblical image of *servant* underscores the essential mission of presidential leadership—service to others.

The biblical image of *seer* points to the visionary quality of presidential leadership. The prophets of old brought the word of the Lord to bear upon contemporary issues. Their visions of hope and justice energized their prophetic proclamations and actions. It seems to me that the seminary president stands in a similar circumstance.

The biblical images of shepherd, steward, servant, and seer describe the unique qualities that are formational and descriptive of the effective president. No one image describes the full task, but rather the task requires the interaction and demonstration of all these qualities and images.

I am reminded of my early studies in architecture. Every building that will endure requires a deep foundation, a stable structure, and a flexibility of materials that will withstand movement and erosion. An enduring presidency must be founded on a deep foundation of personal experience, spirituality, and authentic living. Developed skills and given opportunities and challenges will provide the necessary tension to build the presidential structure. The balance between stress and strain, on the one hand, and leadership materials on the other will provide the necessary flexibility to accommodate the give and take of everyday presidential life. The effective seminary presidency requires a combination of calling, skills, vision, and adaptability.

The Presidency in a Union School

Vincent Cushing

Washington Theological Union

The Founding of Union Schools

A union school in the Roman Catholic Church is an institution founded and operated by a group of religious institutes or church-related agencies. In the case of the Washington Theological Union, this means its founding members are the religious institutes of men that constitute its founding or “Corporate” members. This union school is unique in American Catholicism because its board of trustees is its *sole* governing body; no other church agency stands above it as a corporation board. This highlights the structural similarity of the Washington Theological Union with other American institutions of higher education—and its difference from many church-related schools. Whether this structure will continue is an issue that the Union will probably be asked to address within the next five years.

Union schools came into existence in the Catholic Church in the latter part of the 1960s, in the aftermath of Vatican II. Prior to that, educational entities training students for the priestly ministry were mainly freestanding seminaries (by far the greater number) or university-related divinity schools, with the best known being Catholic University in Washington, DC, and Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. Union schools arose because an intellectual revolution was underway in Roman Catholic theology in the 1960s and '70s. Professors who had completed doctorates in the 1930s, '40s and even '50s found themselves unacquainted with the methodology and language of a new theology. Catholic seminaries for religious men were dysfunctionally small, frequently “cycling” courses annually so that a few professors could teach the entire theological curriculum. The time was apt for change and union schools epitomized that effort. Union schools overcame the weakness of the past in positive ways. Among their notable strengths are the pooling of resources, the amalgamation of libraries, the combining of student bodies from small seminaries, and the ability to draw on a broad pool of talented and well-credentialed faculty. They exemplified the benefits that could be realized from making the many into a unified whole.

Union schools have their own strengths and issues. They are not without problems peculiar to that organizational model. Among the problems are: no

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clear, unified sense of ownership or responsibility; differing traditions of religious life; differing levels of educational “appreciation” among religious institutes; and finally, different ways of relating to the larger church. One overriding issue not adequately addressed in the establishment of this institution was the ways in which the several religious founding institutes would cooperate in its financial support.

Union Schools and the Office of President

The history, composition, and understanding of the religious institutes necessarily shaped how the Union described its mission and relationship to the larger church and society. In turn, this influenced how the office of the presidency developed and was perceived. Is the president a chief executive officer, giving leadership to the diverse entities and molding energies into a unified thrust? Is the president mainly an arbitrator, settling differences among diverse and occasionally opposed constituencies? Is the president empowered to make sure that the enterprise succeeds no matter what, and shall he guide it much like an ocean ferry laden with heavy cargo through the rough seas of church life in the Catholic world during the tumultuous last third of the 20th century? Is the president mainly the chief financial officer, expected both to assure fiscal stability and to raise monies for the future? Does the board expect the president to be an educational visionary who can help the union choose a viable path for the first decades of the next century? Or, finally, is the president expected to be all of the above, which indeed could mean none of the above? The search for an apt and comprehensive metaphor for a seminary president of a union school continues.

The question is whether there is a universal metaphor or whether a metaphor is best developed in each institution. No job description for the president exists in this union school. The presidency is, at its root, whatever the incumbent decides it will be. This very openness brings with it challenge, because it means that the office of president in institutions such as the Washington Theological Union can swing widely in its definition and exercise.

My concern in this essay is to describe both the experience and content of the presidency of this union school. I will try to do this in three parts. First, I will describe the changing theological climate of Roman Catholicism and the impact it has had on Roman Catholic theological education. Second, I will describe three challenges—both institutional and ecclesiastical—that this institution has experienced during the 20 years of my presidency. Third, I will discuss how these challenges have shaped and continue to shape my presidency in order to lay out

the root institutional issues that must be addressed if this institution is to continue as a viable educational endeavor.

The Theological Climate of Roman Catholicism (1965-95) and Its Impact on Roman Catholic Ministerial Education

The Early Years (1965-1980)

In 1975 the Washington Theological Union was entering its seventh year, and I was returning to it as president after a six-month assignment in the Franciscan Order. I had just turned 41 and was eager to assume the presidency of this new and vibrant school. The Washington Theological Union, founded in 1968-69, was initially built on the energy and dedication of a generation of Catholic priests from religious institutes of men, men filled with the vision and optimism of the Catholic Church after Vatican II. Vatican II (1960-65) had been a major theological and structural breakthrough in the church. Key documents signaled radical and unexpected changes in the self-understanding of 20th-century Catholicism. The defensiveness and anti-intellectualism of 400 years from 1565 (the end of the Council of Trent) until 1965 (the end of the Second Vatican Council) ended with a pastoral and theological renaissance of unexpected vitality and vision.

This theological revival called for new approaches in theology, in the teaching of theology for ministry, and in the ministry itself. My colleagues and I were enchanted by the new vistas opening, and we were eager to taste the fresh waters streaming through our church, ready to drink deeply from the fountains of theology being rediscovered with each passing year after the Council. The very magnitude of the breakthrough in the Catholic world presaged a new and future church. Liturgy came alive before our eyes by the retrieval of the historical and patristic heritage of the early church. That, joined with insights from symbolism and psychology, led to a deepened sense of what sound pastoral liturgy could be. A host of regional centers and diocesan experiments, some good, some bad, sprang up throughout European and American centers of liturgical study. Indeed, the theology of the church itself yielded a rich ore of new treasures in what had previously been a desiccated and law-encrusted understanding of the church.

One of the great ecclesiological thinkers of Vatican II, the Dominican friar, Père Yves Congar, now made a cardinal at the age of 89, led the breakthrough in crafting a genuine theology of the laity. Père Congar had paid dearly for thinking creatively, suffering indignity from the church in the years after 1940 when he published his *Vrai et Fausse Reforme Dans L'Eglise*. Yet his historical and

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theological research continued unabated and his own faithful spirit kept him aligned with the Roman Catholic communion.

In the years immediately after Vatican II, the Catholic communion's attention was riveted on the church. Two documents were foundational to the discussion: the doctrinal constitution on the church, *Lumen Gentium* (Light Among the Peoples) and *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope), the latter termed the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Both had immense import for theological education. *Lumen Gentium* exemplified a major retrieval of a biblical and historical understanding of the church, highlighting the role of the laity and the primacy of the local church. It went beyond the Catholic emphasis of an exclusively hierarchical understanding of the church and affirmed unequivocally the radical equality and dignity of all Christians through baptism in water and the Spirit.

In the wake of this realignment of the church's self-understanding unprecedented changes took place in the structure of the local church in the first 15 years after Vatican II. A sense of democracy and participation in decision-making in the church had far greater import than any particular structural change. Parish councils struggled into existence. Priests, professors, and people explored the theology and role of the laity in depth. New ministries sprang up. Nationally, conferences of bishops assumed a far more vigorous role in deciding issues that affected the church in their nations. Efforts were made to incorporate greater collegiality in the entire structure and ethos of the Catholic Church in the United States.

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church, *Gaudium et Spes*, looked through the present to the future. It insisted that theological reflection on the pastoral experience of the people and the experience of ministry constituted a source of theology and played a role in understanding ministry. This insight opened Roman Catholic theology in ways unknown in the church since the author of I Timothy grappled with the experience of ministry or Hippolytus described pastoral liturgy. Patterns of ministry emerged from the needs and hopes of the people. Liberation theology began to emerge from the experience of the disenfranchised in the Third World. Oppressed people found a voice in Brazil, Paraguay, and Guatemala to speak of freedom under the gospel. Civil rights were supported by clergy and laity and understood as a constitutive part of the gospel and the church.

A new understanding of revelation, seen afresh as Scripture and tradition, mutually enriching and interpenetrating, emerged in the Catholic world. This scholarly and critical examination of Scripture had been coming in Catholic

circles since scholars had convinced Pius XII in 1943 to write *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, an encyclical that encouraged the use of the original biblical languages and brought to Catholics critical theory in the study of the books of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. That, joined with a historiography increasingly shorn of polemics and defensiveness, brought about new insights into the meaning of the church, discipleship, and ministry.

Thus, new understandings of ministry came about, and with them, new understandings of both the content and method of doing theology and teaching theology for ministry. Such efforts necessarily cut across confessions, and Catholics found themselves engaged in dialogue with the Christian family and religions of the world. This openness, first experienced at Vatican II, achieved remarkable expression in the *Decree on Ecumenism*. A host of insights centered on a basic change in Roman Catholic thinking: the affirmation of the ecclesial reality of other Christian communities. A new Catholic understanding refused to identify in absolute terms that the true church of Christ was the Roman Catholic communion. At the same time, a new appreciation of world religions was stated and accepted, thereby opening Catholicism to a deeper appreciation of the relational component among monotheists and respect for other religious and spiritual movements.

At the same time as these breakthroughs, a foundational Christology and anthropology marked the passage from a top-down, quasi-magical understanding of Christ to a rich humanistic understanding that emphasized his humanity as exemplifying the human journey of the disciple into God. This deepened discussion on the meaning of discipleship and provided an understanding of the theology of the church in which evangelical discipleship was central to the meaning of church. Discussions about the “nature-grace” issue supported a theological anthropology that reached beyond Reformation and counter-Reformation categories and polemics on the nature of justification.

The advances of Vatican II were of such magnitude that they aligned Vatican II with the great ecumenical councils of the early church, before the split with the East. Far beyond the domestic and narrow deliberations of medieval councils, and yet recognizing the contribution the Council of Trent, Vatican II stood in the Catholic world as the first truly world council for a new age in Catholicism, opening relations with other Christians and world religions, bringing the church into dialogue with events breaking across uncharted horizons, and introducing it to the post-Enlightenment world, a world now characterized by split-second communication and rapid-fire news media.

***Impact of the Theology of Vatican II
on Ministerial Education in the United States***

The institutional pathway by which Catholic seminaries and schools of theology entered into institutional relationships with fellow Christians and American higher education was graphically exemplified by Catholic schools seeking entrance and gaining accreditation from the (then) American Association of Theological Schools. Its welcoming executive director, Dr. Jesse Ziegler, worked indefatigably to assist Catholic schools in achieving accreditation. Indeed, by 1970, five years after the conclusion of Vatican II, 52 of the 54 Roman Catholic graduate seminaries had achieved accreditation.

That number of Catholic seminaries is, of course, startling; it reflects the peculiar directives of the 1917 Code of Canon Law mandating that every diocese should have its own seminary. The directive itself reflects the geography of Northern European countries. Moreover, this number of seminaries reflected the unplanned proliferation of institutions from 1900 to 1960. By 1970 Roman Catholic seminaries and schools of theology were on the verge of two decades of declining numbers, financial problems, ecclesiastical review, and general decline in morale.

The history of Catholic seminaries in the United States, so ably described by Joseph White in his book *The Diocesan Seminary in the United States*,¹ reflects both a randomness in starting seminaries and a certain pride of an immigrant church in numerical and financial strength. The 1970s saw the beginning of a retrenchment due to declining numbers and increasing costs. These twin realities, when coupled with accreditation processes, forced many seminaries to consider soberly what their future was and where they might best put their resources.

The larger American Catholic Church experience was beginning to have its impact on theological education, both positively and negatively. The theological revival of Vatican II sparked a scholarly revival internationally in Roman Catholic theological circles. Authors such as Rahner, Lonergan, Schillebeeckx, Metz, and Tracy were being taught in seminary classrooms. European political theology slowly transformed into Latin American liberation theology. The polemics dropped from biblical and historical study. Protestant authors such as Niebuhr, Moltmann, and Pannenberg were studied as seriously by Roman Catholics as they were by our Protestant colleagues. The manuals of neo-scholastic theology were shelved as reference works of a past age. The counter-Reformation was happily over and broad ecumenical conversations sprang up. Professors struggled to develop a sound pastoral theology that would effectively translate the breakthroughs of the present into the pastoral ministry of the future.

The picture was not entirely rosy. In 1968 a serious controversy over the church's authority to prohibit artificial birth control caused an international storm. In the U.S. it had wracked the Catholic University of America, only six miles from the WTU. Its reverberations and aftershocks were felt both throughout the Catholic Church nationally and throughout the world. Washington, DC, was the particular site where the tornado touched down with a force not experienced anywhere else in the entire Catholic world. A professor at Catholic University, a fine theologian and devout priest, Father Charles Curran, led a cadre of young scholars and doctoral candidates in protesting the Vatican Decree. In addition, a number of local pastors and associate pastors joined the protest. The response of the official church was cold and strong. Eventually, almost all professors at the University who joined the protest either retracted their views or were removed from the university. More than 40 active priests were suspended from active ministry by the local archbishop. Professors throughout the nation took sides pro and con.

This was the first of what was to become a series of disputes within American Catholicism. Frequently, these disputes focused on alternative understandings of human sexuality. As such, they deeply affected families and young people. Yet, to this date both sides remain linked by the bonds of faith and charity—despite disputes about these issues and the role of authority in the church. For reasons not entirely clear, Catholics in the United States do not engage in structural separation as a viable way of solving church problems. Catholics have not divided into separate sects, but have remained one despite substantive dispute. I have tried to understand the dynamics of this because they deeply affect both the doing of theology and how we teach the role of authority in a school of theology and seminary. I think the basis for this is that educated, faithful, concerned people do not feel alienated from the heart of our Catholic faith: gospel and Sacrament. True, there may be differences with respect to authority. Those differences do not lead to disrespect for office in the church nor do they claim that those who exercise it are people of bad faith. Rather, there is an awareness of human fallibility on both sides. Often the key is this: while one side insists the question is one of faith, the other side says it is not. They claim these disputes reflect the struggle to understand what the faith is calling us to, in, and through these disputes.

Debate raged on, with participants seen as loyalists (papal) or liberals locked in combat about the method of doing theology and the role of papal authority. Roman authorities were deeply attentive to the entire dispute. The year that the controversy stormed through Washington was the very year the Washington Theological Union was founded: 1968. It was the same year the

Democratic convention in Chicago faced the rage of students over the war in Vietnam. The academy became the arena in which theological and political battles were fought. The Catholic Church in the United States has never been the same since, despite herculean efforts to put the djinni back in the bottle.

The Founding of the Washington Theological Union

Those of us involved with the founding of the Union, or, as it was then known, the Coalition of Religious Seminaries, naively thought we could begin with a new slate, oblivious to the narrow constrictions of the past, entering a new spring in which a thousand flowers would bloom. Initial discussion recognized that theological education for ministry had to be a life-long process and what better way to inculcate that than to teach theological methodology and allow adult learners to return yearly for needed content and what their ministry required. Creative as that thought was, we inevitably succumbed to the particularly Catholic notion that more is always better. Although we had begun with a three-year Master of Divinity degree, within 10 years we reverted to the classical Catholic model of 100 credits stretched over four years.

Nevertheless, we tried as best we could to recast the curriculum to reflect fundamental changes in theology in the decade of the '60s. Systematic theology still ruled the day, but allied subjects—Scripture, ethics, and church history—assumed their own strong (and new) role in the teaching of the theological curriculum. And a new discipline was added, one previously unknown in Catholic circles but now given a core role in the curricular time allotted to it: pastoral studies. Our curricular structure markedly resembled the M.Div. curriculum characteristic of most other schools. As the years went on, this curriculum became normative. Despite a rather heavy-handed effort by a bureaucrat of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in exploring whether Catholic schools might withdraw from the accrediting association, all Roman Catholic schools remained within The Association of Theological Schools.

Religious Institutes and Seminaries

Vatican II had encouraged religious communities to return to the genius of their founders' charism. This effectively ended the homogenization of religious life that had been going on for centuries in the church. As each institute returned to its roots and explored its meaning for today, unexpected changes took place, changes not always welcomed by the membership, nor, indeed, by the Holy See. What ensued was a period of creativity, polarization, and the beginnings of serious decline in membership, evidenced both in the inability of religious institutes to attract new members and the loss of current members. Stress from

within and without became routine, thereby pushing congregations, and especially congregations of women, to rethink their role within the church and to redefine themselves in new and creative ways. As this inexorably continued, some institutes lost vitality and ratcheted down from mission to maintenance to survival. Yet it was precisely all religious institutes that the WTU understood itself to be serving. Aftershocks reverberated throughout this institution and others engaged in educating male and female members of religious institutes.

Simultaneously, laity and religious sisters began to enter seminary to study for ministry. This new population shaped and influenced the ethos of seminary and ministry. The clerical caste system showed stress. Clericalism would fight a creditable rear-guard action, but it was being invaded at its outermost barriers, forced to retreat to select clerical enclaves where the gnostic language of clerical culture was the *lingua franca*.

This points up a curious fact of my experience—that on the whole women seem more naturally disposed for ministry than men. They usually bring a set of dispositions and skills more inclined to encourage listening and a better sense of comfort with sexuality, whether married or single. Religious sisters are particularly good at ministry and are entering it, even though they cannot be ordained due to the church's current discipline.

In Catholicism the theology of the classroom necessarily shapes and deeply influences theology for ministry. It affects the parish, the priest, the bishop, the lay practitioner, and the congregation. From Scripture, theology of church, ecumenism, Christology, and anthropology emerged the first traces of a new theology for ministry, repositioning the role of the presbyter in the church and the new role of ministry accorded to laity. The Catholic school of ministry in the '70s asked where this theology would lead the ministry and the methods best used to educate students for a changed ministry in a new age. The question, an open and scholarly one when I became president in 1975, would become a political battleground by 1980 with the accession of John Paul II to the See of Peter.

The Middle and Later Years (1980-1993)

It is difficult to underestimate the impact of the papacy of Pope John Paul II on the Roman Catholic Church. He is a figure of international stature, impressive piety, and strongly held views on world society and the internal life of the church. It is in this latter area, the life of the church internally, that his pontificate had its impact on theological education. In effect, the climate changed from one of open inquiry in an ecumenical context to a preoccupation with unearthing

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heterodoxy. This is graphically demonstrated by a host of measures that includes the dismissal of professors, the attempt to control appointments in theology in Catholic universities, and the Vatican review of some American bishops and of all American Roman Catholic seminaries.

In another section I will detail how this affected the Washington Theological Union. For now, I wish to recount my personal experience of the factors that led to this official review of seminaries and schools for ministry. In the late 1970s when schools such as WTU, the Catholic Theological Union of Chicago, and the Jesuit schools at Berkeley and Cambridge were barely 10 years old, concerned voices among the hierarchy and the soon-to-be hierarchy began to be heard about the dysfunctional role that such “religious schools” (meaning schools conducted by one or a union of religious institutes of men) were having on the teaching of theology and preparation for ministry. Allegations of heterodoxy, concerns about education outside the Catholic tradition, and the decrying of an allegedly cavalier treatment of official church teaching became common. I was present when a respected educator, then a rector of a seminary and now a bishop of a small diocese, confessed severe concern about what he perceived to be “unsound teaching,” basing his concern on the number of professors who no longer possessed the Roman pontifical degree but rather had studied at prestigious American, Canadian, or European universities in faculties neither professedly Catholic nor licensed by the Holy See.

Because his remarks were uncharacteristically sharp, our discussion in committee (we were both working on the Steering Committee of the Bishops’ Committee on Priestly Formation, engaged in preparing the draft for the 1981 edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation*) went on for a couple of hours, somewhat to the consternation of our colleagues. I next came across this issue when I was a member of the Committee on Priestly Formation of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men in the late 1970s and 1980s. It became clear that a draft instrument for a Vatican review of seminaries was in the Bishops’ Committee on Priestly Formation but being withheld from the religious institutes. The chairperson of the bishops’ committee, a mannerly bishop (now deceased) from a small New England diocese, did not reveal the content of that document for almost a year to those of us who would be affected by it. When he finally made it available he claimed that, as a directive from the Holy See, it reflected the desire of the Holy Father to review American seminaries and schools of theology for ministry.

That seemed a trifle difficult to accept because he also informed us that in his first meeting with the Holy Father, the Pope indicated only a passing knowledge

of what the American bishop was talking about. It was not until a second meeting, approximately two or three days later, that the Holy Father indicated familiarity with the document. Obviously, he seemed to have been briefed in the interim. The initial draft of the document was hopelessly European, written in Italian, evidencing no familiarity with issues of governance, accreditation, or American higher education. Nevertheless, it was to be implemented. A few American educators claimed this study was a move against religious seminaries formulated by a group of American bishops upset about what they considered heterodoxy among religious institutes. These sources implied that some American bishops had used connections to various Roman congregations, most notably the one in charge of seminaries and universities, to foist this on the American church. There was no way of proving such allegations true or false.

The person in charge of the “American” desk at the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities was a British monsignor who had spent a total of three days in America. Although well-educated and a part-time lecturer at a prestigious Roman university, he evidenced the cultural limitations of a well-intentioned bureaucrat.

Ultimately, despite the effort, expense, and review, the Vatican study unearthed very little. In regard to diocesan seminaries, a few relatively insignificant issues were raised by Cardinal Baum, then Prefect of the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities.

The story was not the same when it came to religious seminaries, however. Those not administered by the Society of Jesus were singled out. WTU was specifically corrected to institute a review of how priesthood was taught, being admonished that we were “not differentiating” the ministry of the priest from that of the laity. This institution did two things: two visits to Rome to speak with Congregation officials and ongoing institutional conversations with the local cardinal archbishop. Eventually, the issue was resolved, but it was clear that a shot had been fired across the Union’s bow.

This introductory history provides a brief context for thinking about Catholic seminaries after 1960. Theology, with its development and controversies, is central to understanding the education of today’s candidate for the ministry. Related to that, the structural expressions of seminary education now play a key role in shaping the kind of priest or lay minister the Roman Catholic Church produces. Preliminary studies of quality and effectiveness are coming to the fore, as evidenced by research funded by the Lilly Endowment and published by the National Catholic Educational Association’s Seminary Division.

Three Challenges

Challenge One: Finances

The initial challenge I faced when assuming the presidency of the Washington Theological Union had been present but unattended to from its founding: finances. The problem was substantial and affected long-term survival. This came home graphically in 1975 during my interview for the presidency, when the financial report, which I had previously read, was termed “inaccurate”—but only after I had accepted the position of president. I myself was so naive that I didn’t attend to the problem for a year. After all, enrollment was close to 300 students, the Union was still riding the wave of a late 1960s boom in candidates for the priesthood, and I, mistakenly as it turned out, presumed that situation would never end. I realized how mistaken I was when I painstakingly worked my way through the 1976 audit.

It was clear that we could not meet our payroll. An advisor encouraged me to ask for a tuition advance to meet first semester obligations and to begin to raise money. Raise money? Me? How? It was at this juncture that I read with a good deal more interest than I had expected a competitive grants application for fundraising from the Lilly Endowment. The Lilly application form became a self-taught long-range planning process. It relentlessly raised question after question about what a school was or was not doing. So far as I could see, we were doing little or nothing that would help us. I began raising questions about how the school had begun, and specifically about what arrangements had been made for the financing of the institution. What had happened to the various endowments that the sponsoring orders had raised to support the preexisting programs they had sponsored? What had happened to the fundraising efforts for the annual fund of the various seminaries? Clear answers were hard to come by, but it seemed that all that money was now paying for the room, board, and facility maintenance of their own students in their local colleges or houses. How had that happened? How had this school begun without any attention whatsoever to its funding and its ongoing costs?

No one knew. The original staff was off the scene and it was now my problem. Where was the board of trustees? What could it do? The trustees indicated a sense of helplessness, and when I said I needed \$90,000 to get through the fiscal year they grew pale. It was then that I began to think that our board of trustees was possibly an assemblage of religious personages who had hired me to run the place and not bother them with serious issues like finances. That’s why I was there, evidenced by their repeated and prolonged silences in meetings. That was so characteristic of the “politeness” of religious life. I had no

intention of participating in that charade any longer than I had to. It was with a great deal of relief that the then Coalition was awarded a grant by the Lilly Endowment, and we began the task of development in 1976-77.

No easy task, raising money in a union school. No individual group feels responsible and the issue gets passed from one to the other. A welter of fundraising problems confronted the Washington Theological Coalition: it was too liberal, it didn't have a Catholic name, it was confused with the Washington Theological Consortium, the umbrella agency that coordinated educational programs of seven Protestant and Catholic schools. To top it off, the religious institutes were deeply involved in their own fundraising and the very people whom we thought our likely friends in fundraising viewed the Coalition now as a competitor for the same educational dollar.

I have gone through a series of development officers. Despite that, we have made advances in endowment and at the time of this writing are engaged in a capital campaign for a building. In endowment we have raised between seven and eight million dollars. The income from that, when joined with the annual fund and the contributed services from the founding members, has enabled the school to run in the black since 1976-77. The Union is now testing whether the religious communities are attuned to the fundraising needs of the school that educates their membership for ministry as it establishes its permanent site.

Challenge Two: Identity and Ownership of the Institution and the Educational Enterprise

A second challenge centered on the identity of the institution and its ownership, both educationally and ecclesiastically. This second issue, which is at the core of the financial problem, was and is the need for the Washington Theological Union to name and claim its identity. After that, and related to its identity, the founding religious institutes of the Union need to continue to exercise responsible ownership and stewardship. The questions about identity and ownership can be asked in a number of ways: is the WTU a seminary or is it a school of theology for ministry? In the Roman Catholic Church, the two are not synonymous.

A basic awareness emerged from the conversations occasioned by the Vatican visit. Schools run by religious are not the same as freestanding diocesan seminaries. Indeed, the 1981 *Program of Priestly Formation* indicated there were now two types of programs in the U.S. available for priestly formation and education. They served different populations, had different structures and different philosophies of education.

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Union schools are more open to ecumenical scholarship and seek professors who are both good teachers and have time for scholarship. Moreover, their professors tend to participate more in professional societies and in heading commissions and efforts that aid the scholarly work of the church. Finally, the diocesan and union schools tend to approach the teaching authority of the church differently. Both respect that authority, but the give-and-take of the academy and critical reflection on the exercising of that teaching authority are more frequent in religious schools of theology for ministry.

Whether some diocesan bishops viewed the collaborative religious schools either as competitive or as not supporting official church teaching is not clear. Nevertheless, the diocesan, freestanding model asserted its superiority (and doctrinal integrity), especially in the area of spiritual formation for priesthood. Religious, union schools looked for quality by measuring institutions according to educational and professional criteria such as publications, research, papers delivered at learned societies, guest lectureships. If there is a line of difference, it concerns the atmosphere in which the educational task is carried out, and to a lesser extent, how the spiritual formation of prospective clergy is carried out. This does not mean one is better than the other—indeed there is scant evidence available one way or the other, but it reflects different philosophies of education and spiritual formation.

The Washington Theological Union experienced difficulties from the Vatican Study because it was singled out by the Holy See. Initial questions focused on how this institution was accountable to the church. While the main inquiry focused on accountability and orthodoxy, questions of spiritual formation, ordination of women, and style of presidential and academic administration came up for review.

A key recommendation of the Vatican team required that the Union institute a course on the ordained priesthood. Ultimately, this made a good deal of sense and responded to a deficiency in this institution. My task as president necessarily involved careful navigation between the rock of Peter and the turbulent waters of imposing a course on a faculty that felt beleaguered and unjustly singled out by church authorities. The faculty silently assented to the establishment of the course on priesthood for candidates for ordination. Meanwhile, how the Union handled this delicate issue with the Holy See was quietly monitored by the 20 or so religious institutes of men who sent students to the Union. On the one hand, they wanted to be sure that we dealt with the Holy See in respectful and fraternal ways. On the other hand, they pressed us to teach sound theology that addressed contemporary issues facing the church.

We dealt with the issue by holding a series of open hearings. The chair of the board, other trustees, the academic dean, and the faculty attended the hearings. In the first meeting a prized student was asked what it meant to be a priest in the contemporary church. Gifted with a winsome manner, charming in presentation, he happily admitted he could not say what it meant. There endeth the lesson, I thought. The need to institute a course on priesthood was amply demonstrated to all who had ears to hear.

During these days local church authorities continued to monitor the Union through inquiry about orthodoxy. Thus to a great extent the latter half of the 1980s was taken up with questions of orthodoxy as interpreted by church authorities, visits to officials in Rome to assure them of the orthodoxy of the Union, and the instituting of a course on the theology of priesthood that served to demonstrate that we remained receptive to their directives. Of course, there was a price to pay for this internally. Some professors, especially women, viewed the installation of the course on priesthood as a re-clericalization of the Union. The larger issue, of course, was that this type of ongoing internal review is an immense diversion from the mission of the institution and a pervasive distraction. Unfortunately, across many Christian confessions, this lesson is lost on church bureaucrats seized by the hint of heterodoxy.

The Union weathered this because of the support and strength of the board of trustees. Both chairperson and members exercised leadership in inquiring whether there was any foundation to the allegations of heterodoxy. Satisfied that there was not, they stood steadfastly behind the Union. They supported me as president and resolutely assured the faculty that they had no problem with either doctrinal instruction or the pluralism of theology evident in our curriculum. This support extended even to visiting authorities in Rome and in conversations with the local archbishop. In each case they extended their mantle of ecclesiastical leadership to support this institution and enable it to continue its important educational efforts.

Challenge Three: Space Issues, Mission, and Ownership

The third challenge that I experienced, one that emerged only after this essay was begun, is on the occasion of moving our campus. The challenge is one of ownership and mission; it is ultimately a good development. The issues that have arisen because of this problem—ownership and mission—need to be raised and aired now on a more serious level. The question of moving and having our own quarters has to be framed within the horizon of the future of ministry, the role of religious institutes in the church, and the possibilities for

carving out meaning for the church in society as we enter a new century and a new millennium. We need to ask what all this means for the Washington Theological Union. Happily, this question is now being asked—after three years of study—in our Excellence Project, described below.

Reflections on the Challenges Facing the Union

The ministry of the church needs to serve our people by raising up the best possibilities of what it means to be Christian in the 21st century. The first task involves getting beyond the endless “domestic” disputes that seldom cease in the Catholic Church today. The gospel does not exist solely for the church; the church exists also to serve the gospel. The gospel is not about division but unity, not about external vesture but internal transformation, not about “being holy” but about becoming Christian humans. Our people need light and nourishment about what it means to be born and to be born into Christian faith. They need to know the call of Christ and echo that call in their hearts.

So, too, the church vis-a-vis society. The church continues to try to enact its self-understanding in society, unaware that its self-understanding is rooted in a past age and not reflective of the best in theology and faith. Sometimes, the church seems blind to the reality that it is remarkably inept in communicating its own understanding to a society that is basically Manichean. The church has failed to accept and incorporate its own best thinking and theology. It steadfastly refuses to critique its own internal structure, while holding fast to the last vestiges of a late medieval and counter-Reformation church. Its own theology has outstripped its structure. The frenzied examination of all theological thinking in the light of pre-conciliar categories demonstrates the dilemma the church recreates for itself. The refusal to accept the role of the local church and the theology of the episcopate have begun to make the church dysfunctional. The need to reconsider the theology and role of the papacy in a different ecclesiological construct leaves that office increasingly isolated and defensive. Instead of a ministry towards unity, supporting the bond of faith and charity among all baptized in Christ, we witness alienation and disunity, insensitivity and heavy-handedness, with precious little willingness to address issues that history presses upon our age.

These areas begin to describe what a faculty of theology and a school of ministry need to be engaged in as they reassess mission and ministry. We stand between the existing structure and theology and reach out to what we think a future should be. The danger is that we become passive recipients of history, waiting for developments or, even worse, reacting to developments. The Washing-

ton Theological Union needs a firm measure of stability, especially in finances, and needs to be clear about its own identity, while both pursuing and creating its future intentionally. It has to own its mission with no apologies, it has to stay in communion with the church, and it needs to speak far more pointedly to the society in which it lives. These general goals need to be translated into mission, statement of belief and values, and specific institutional goals that can be developed and implemented in the future after the year 2000.

The Presidential Task—Present and Future

The Nature of the Seminary Presidency in a Union School

In the years that I have served as president, most of my efforts have focused on fundraising, fiscal stability, maintaining the freedom the academy needs, and now securing its site during a time of financial stringency. That is not to say that these challenges were the sole areas of my attention. In the nonprofit world, personnel is always the key to bringing an enterprise to successful achievement. I have been privileged to work with dedicated and talented professionals both academically and administratively. Hiring of talented staff is precisely the area, however, where financial pressure adversely affects the nonprofit institution. Too often we cannot afford to hire the professional we need to do the job. Experience shows that we suffer the consequences.

Service in The Association of Theological Schools, both on its executive committee and later as president, provided me with a splendid bi-national overview of theological education for ministry. Additional service as founding chairperson of the Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center (AMERC), now based in Berea, Kentucky, proved an invaluable educational and ecumenical opportunity. Both tasks evidence personal commitment to the ecumenical movement and my sense of kinship with other seminaries, both Catholic and Protestant. Both arenas provided a forum to address quality in theological education for ministry. The past 20 years provided me the opportunity to assist other schools through consultation and accreditation visits. This involved both evangelical and Jewish seminaries, as well as mainline Protestant and Catholic schools. I continue this service to the profession on an annual basis.

Of late, I have grown increasingly uncomfortable with the “role” of chief executive officer in an educational institution. I have sensed that construct as inadequate to handle the ethos of an educational institution. A strong entrepreneurial approach creates as many difficulties as it solves. The nature of this institution is that faculty members are quite independent, and my discomfort with the entrepreneurial model arose from a desire to adopt what I would

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consider a more “ministerial” model, one built on collaboration, shared leadership, and joint goal setting. In recent years I shifted to the latter model. As I was searching for a way to understand this model, I came across the thinking of an esteemed colleague, Robert Cooley, president of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. Dr. Cooley’s thinking was attractive to me. He understood the role of president as working with *both* governing bodies of an institution, the board of trustees and the faculty. In this perspective the main internal task of the president is to insure that both groups carry out with integrity their respective roles within the school, one concerned mainly with policy and institutional well-being, the other addressing the manifold demands of insuring daily quality graduate education.

I see this model as more in harmony with my being a Franciscan, a person living out discipleship as an evangelical Christian within the Catholic Church. I seek an approach to Christianity rooted in the gospel that reads the signs of the times to discern how the gospel has meaning in our age and society. I believe the evangelical component should also play a shaping influence in priestly and ministerial education. Relating gospel to world and society necessarily demands that theology for ministry be our concern and that theology and all the related disciplines be related to the hermeneutical task of interpreting the gospel to this age and the future. Indeed, I think the best working model of the church is one of discipleship and the allocation of duties and functions among the disciples according to their gifts and charisms.

The Roman Catholic Church needs to reappropriate a more gospel-based understanding of itself to address society and its own membership. As it stands now, its working ecclesiology stems from its self-understanding of its hierarchical nature. The result is that the church loses touch with many of its loyal and sympathetic adherents. It mistakes its organizational chart, its skeleton as it were, for the living organism of the People of God, thereby running the risk of being unresponsive to the Christians and world. Its operative ecclesiology affects decision-making, pastoral practice, and the paradigm of ministry.

This, in turn, influences ministerial and priestly education. Catholic schools that are educating future priests and dedicated laity need to prepare preachers and teachers skilled in social analysis and equipped to communicate the nourishment of the gospel to our people. This understanding, then, of what we should be doing serves as the organizing principle of program and curriculum development. It should enable us so to structure and set priorities for courses and the sequence of courses that we make informed judgments on the relative importance, position, and scheduling of educational components. That, in turn, needs to be brought into dialogue with the official directives on training for the

priestly ministry of the church as contained in the most recent edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation*.

This takes seriously the ethos of living and ministering in a North American context and raises those questions and issues that arise in this society. In this way we are faithful to a seminal insight of Vatican II that the church is experienced primarily as a local church and that the theological note of *catholicity* is concerned with the hermeneutical and pastoral task of addressing a culture and age, and understanding the conceptual synapses that make that culture function and carry meaning for people.

The Presidency, Trusteeship, and Excellence

The 1990s began with a diminution of pressure on the Washington Theological Union. Indeed, it appeared to be a decade of promise. The board of trustees had agreed to a capital campaign to increase the Union's endowment to approximately 10 million dollars. In addition, board retreats were molding the board into an effective force that was addressing key educational issues and exercising imaginative oversight for the institution. Unexpectedly, a crisis would emerge that proved far more troublesome to the Union than previous real or implied threats.

The development of the board of trustees in the Washington Theological Union and the role of the president in relation to the board is a story of achievement and frustration. Ten to 12 years ago we invited lay people to board membership. Lay people brought with them questions of quality and concern about the value of the education for ministry, both priestly and lay.

In the past five years one lay trustee has persistently raised the issue of excellence and how it could be translated to be empirically assessed at the Washington Theological Union. Simultaneously, our faculty initiated conversations with prominent theologians about issues of theological education for ministry. Both tracks led to "The Excellence Project," an endeavor that involved a series of geographical interviews with congregants and alumni/ae to reflect upon the educational experience of the Union. These interviews, summarized in the study "Towards a More Perfect Union," showed the Union's education to be quite effective, despite problems that needed attention. The general assessment of the Union's program was that it brought the student to a "transformative" experience, one in which the student's faith was challenged, refined, reassembled, and made operative in an adult and caring fashion.

This reach for excellence had important effects for the faculty and for the student body. The Union also reviewed the history of its curriculum and carried out a comparative study of the curricular reform efforts in law, medicine, and

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business. Along with these studies the Union's faculty is reviewing teaching effectiveness with experts in teaching. Most recently, the faculty and the board of trustees met jointly to discuss issues of common concern in educational excellence. Finally, and perhaps of greatest import, the faculty has completed a curriculum review. This year (1995-96) it will redesign curriculum and syllabi to bring the project to completion.

In addition to board retreats we have engaged in extensive trustee education by having the board participate in a week-long workshop on trusteeship in Roman Catholic schools of theology and seminaries. More than half the board members have participated in such workshops. The result of this has been twofold: deep board engagement with the educational program and the finances of the institution, and designing ways of assessing board and presidential performance. In addition, we have instituted a trustee affairs committee that has improved the manner by which new trustees are nominated and elected.

The Presidency and the Space, Mission, Ownership Issue

A far more serious problem developed about space. This came to graphic expression in the March 1993, board meeting when trustees were locked in intense discussion about the physical site and the future of the Union. Simply stated, the religious community from which we rented space needed to rent the quarters for increased income. Finally, the decision was made to move, but what it entailed financially was not fully clear. In the months following, the space needs of the Union were addressed, and more importantly, the cost of those needs. It is a concern whether the Union will have the finances to handle the annual upkeep and debt service. This entire issue is now pressing on the Union because it has agreed with its lessors to vacate its premises for a new facility by December 31, 1995.

My sense is that I failed as president to "read the times" in seeing the space problem on the horizon. I mistakenly believed that we could resolve all difficulties and perhaps even be able to buy the current facility; the lessor viewed the building as a source of long-term income and had no intention of selling. A second failure was my inability to see the potential for conflict that would eventually arise from this situation. I should have foreseen that conflict taking shape. Nevertheless, the disagreement that spilled into a board meeting left a stinging, and ultimately unhealed, scar.

This highlights a potential institutional weakness of a union model of school—the religious institutes struggle to translate their religious institute's endorsement into effective sponsorship of the institution. One of the issues that remains before I complete my service is how to address this question strategi-

cally so that it can be examined and solved. It also suggests, however, that I have perhaps assumed too much of a role of a Mr. Fixit, and that basic issues of ownership have not been properly addressed. Perhaps I went for short-term solutions for what are long-term problems or did not succeed in framing the issue well so that it could be attended to in a way that brings closure.

Summary and Conclusions

I wanted to complete this essay within six months, but its elongation has demanded that I return to the task both as new events unfold and as I engage more deeply in the kind of reflection it was intended to prompt. From this vantage point I have framed a set of views both on this institution and on the office of the presidency. Finally, I conclude with the impact of the entire experience on my life as a Christian and ordained priest.

The Long-Term Experience of Being President of the Washington Theological Union

Perhaps my simplest achievement is survival in long-term service. There is a value in continuity because it yields the time to work with others in planning, in raising funds, in working on establishing a good faculty, and in formulating policies that are, by necessity, long-term and perduring in their effect on an institution. During my presidency I have seen the length of service of Roman Catholic seminary presidents drop to fewer than five years. A rapid turnover of presidents virtually insures mediocrity in educational quality. It becomes impossible to understand what quality might entail in an institution before one is packed off and on the way.

Another value of continuity bears mentioning: the trustworthiness of the incumbent. It is a sad time for the ministry of the Roman Catholic Church as it faces reports of sexual abuse and what appears to be a decline in academic ability of candidates. These issues emerge while we witness a reemergent clericalism. These are both unhealthy developments. The upshot of these negative factors is that as president one experiences being consistently evaluated by colleagues, donors, and prospective faculty for the trust that you can deliver the goods institutionally and personally. It is difficult to tell the wonderful story of ministry when you are besieged by public scandals in the ministry.

The obvious question, then, is this: why continue as president? My first response is that the intellectual life has always been my preferred arena. The academic enterprise has struggled to preserve a climate of intellectual freedom. A long-term president achieves excessive clout in managing an institution

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because he is one of the few persons who has stayed with the enterprise. One would think this would enable a president to assemble a good working team, but there is a “culture of turnover” in Roman Catholic schools. Good people tend to move on to colleges and universities with rapidity or to avoid administrative posts if they stay at the institution. As a result Roman Catholic ministerial education runs the risk of being second-rate. Until a host of issues is systematically addressed—presidential turnover, selection of candidates, crises within the ordained ministry, excessive control by the church, assuring faculty of professional treatment and tenure, sound and supportive finances—the enterprise will be less than effective. Admittedly, these are powerful issues, but they must be addressed if seminaries and schools of theology are to provide the quality of education that the pastoral ministry of the church now needs.

When I leave the Union I will be the last of the founding professors from the 1960s. That necessarily raises a key issue: how to arrange a smooth departure. Anyone familiar with higher education knows that the downdraft after the departure of a long-term president—no matter how competent or incompetent—can indeed be turbulent and disruptive. It will be very important not to dislocate this institution during a time of presidential transition.

Looking to the Future

My long experience in this school prompts me to address what I believe is both the overriding issue facing the Washington Theological Union and wherein I believe it can realize its greatest strengths: the ownership of the institution by the religious institutes that founded it and the establishment of a collaborative model of education for clergy and laity. This most recent issue of space and site points up that the religious institutes have ownership of this institution and are now being called to a much deeper level of ownership. This is evidenced in a variety of ways, some of lesser moment than others, but all pointing to a new period in the history of the Washington Theological Union. Moreover, to take the initiative in establishing a collaborative model of education will be an immense contribution to a church that tends to be restorationist and to look longingly at clericalism for the paradigm of leadership.

The question arises whether my perception of the issue is accurate and, if so, what steps ought to be taken. I am clear on this, that if the Union could seriously address and discuss its ownership, it could then determine its future. In regard to strategies to address it, my own thoughts are only now taking shape. Perhaps we should carefully review all the founding documents and see what they intended and what was the process, if that can be retrieved, by which the Union

was formed. Then we should carefully describe the issue of ownership in its salient parts. This would entail, but not be limited to, the following: the nature of the agreement among the founding, corporate members; the implications contained therein; the willingness of the founding institutes to renew that covenant; and a setting down once more of what that covenant entails. Factoring in a quarter century of working with laity will also be a large part of this process. This highlights my belief that the Union is first and in its most essential expression precisely a *union*, a covenant among the religious institutes and laity. Until that consciousness is patently mature, it will remain unduly vulnerable. That covenant needs to reaffirm the permanence of the commitment of the member orders and their dedication to the church of the future. They need to say that they are with the Union no matter what. This means that they will handle issues differently, not dealing with issues on the basis of a tentative commitment.

A second serious issue for the Union to address is its finances. Over the years this has been mainly addressed by the founding members and two foundations. The time is now, before my departure, to get our finances in order. Questions of expense need to be addressed. Keen financial planning is needed to address what a realistic five-year plan looks like. The entire question of debt and ongoing annual expenses needs to be faced squarely. The founding orders have to identify what the running of the institution will truly cost and whether they are willing to assume that burden. If anything, the current concerns about renovating the new building have cast this issue in bold relief.

Both these issues highlight the need to design carefully the process by which I will be replaced. It becomes very important that *all* issues be on the table so that there are no rude surprises for my successor and that mutual expectations be clearly negotiated, with timetables and agreed-upon criteria for what will mark achievement. Ideally, that person needs to stay in the office for a minimum of five years, so that issues of continuity, ownership, planning, and finances are consistently addressed.

Concluding Remarks

I will complete my service as president after the Union has moved to its new quarters. By that time I will be in my mid 60s, and the Union will have been established so that it will remain as a theological and ministerial center within the American Catholic experience. History tells me that when it comes to issues in the Catholic Church, money and power play a key role. Some may think that

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regrettable, but I view it as the human condition and the way the game is played. My goal has been and remains to deal with establishing this type of theological school in the world of the church and religion. The issue of how one does that, the means, are, of course, vital to maintaining a personal sense of integrity and morality. I have long since stopped wringing my hands about how things ought to be and given myself to changing the way things are.

During my 20 years as president I have experienced the openness of the papacy of Paul VI and the arrival of this wintry season in the church. I have formed clear opinions on the problems—and the promise—of Roman Catholic theological education for ministry, both ordained and lay. I have seen the gradual discouraging of scholarship and serious intellectual engagement by church bureaucrats and become regretfully aware that the church is trying to restore the pre-conciliar past of the counter-Reformation. Despite that, one soldier on. With C. Peguy I believe “*Toute est grace.*”

It has been a wonderful experience: hard, demanding, testing one’s faith and one’s strength. In the midst of it, I found out who I am, both for good and for ill. I entered the presidency a relatively young man; I shall leave it an older man. Has it been worth the effort? I believe so, and whether this institution survives in no way will invalidate that belief. Twenty-seven years of truth and meaning are better than no years of truth and meaning. Of course, the real reward would be to see it grow and prosper for succeeding ages and times. Meanwhile, I live with the provisional and turn it—and my life—over to the design and goodness of the God who has touched my life.

ENDNOTE

1. Joseph M. White, *The Diocesan Seminary in the United States: A History from the 1780s to the Present* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

Reflections on Fourteen Years as a Seminary President

James C. Fenhagen

The General Theological Seminary

The General Theological Seminary is a seminary of the Episcopal Church located in the Chelsea District of New York City. Founded in 1817, it has the distinction of being the only seminary of the Episcopal Church established by the church's General Convention which still elects members to the Seminary's board of trustees. The General Seminary occupies a city block with a campus of 15 buildings including the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, constructed in 1898, faculty and student housing, and the St. Mark's Library, one of the major research libraries in the Episcopal Church.

In the years between 1978 and 1992, the seminary maintained a faculty of 15 women and men (including the dean and librarian) and saw its student body fluctuate between a high of 175 and a low of 100. The General Seminary is an accredited member of The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and offers the M.Div., M.A., S.T.M., and Th.D. degrees. Its current endowment is approximately 25 million dollars. The long history of the seminary and its location in the heart of New York City gives it a reputation of distinction in the field of theological education and scholarship. It is primarily a residential seminary with a strong tradition of worship and spiritual formation.

I was called to be the 10th dean of the General Seminary in September 1978. At that time the designation "dean" referred to the chief administrative officer of the seminary as was the custom in Episcopal seminaries. This designation was expanded to "dean and president" several years later, although the description of the job remained the same. At the time of my call to General, I was serving as the director of the Church and Ministry Program at Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut. Previous to this, I had served as a parish priest in Maryland, South Carolina, and Washington, DC, and as a diocesan director of education. I was ordained in the Episcopal Church in 1954 after receiving an M.Div. from the Virginia Theological Seminary. By 1954 I had written two books, *Mutual Ministry* in 1977 and *More Than Wanderers* in 1978, reflecting my interest in ministry studies and spirituality, which brought my name to the attention of the General Seminary's board of trustees. My major qualification for the job, as I saw it, was my experience in innovative education

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gained at Hartford and my experience in human relations training and community building which I had accumulated over the years. I came to the General Seminary not as an academic, but as a practitioner with the instincts and experience of a pastor, which in later years proved to be both an asset and a liability. I resigned as dean and president of The General Theological Seminary on August 31, 1992, to take a new position with the Episcopal Church Foundation. Although not without some frustration and difficulty, I look upon my 14 years at GTS as the most important and most fulfilling years of my ministry.

In organizing my reflections on my ministry at the seminary I am dividing my 14 years into three segments: the Early Years (1978-1981), the Middle Years (1981-1989), and the Latter Years (1989-1992). In each of these segments I will address four aspects of my work that seem to reflect most what I actually did. I identify these as (1) Administration and Development; (2) Community Building, which includes relations with and within the student body, board of trustees, alumni/ae, and the larger community of colleagues and friends of the seminary; (3) Faculty Relations, which I note separately because of its importance; and (4) Personal Reflections, which constitute not only the things that challenged and nourished me personally in the job, but also, what on reflection I learned from what I did right and what I did wrong.

The Early Years (1978-1981)

Administration and Development

My first days at the General Seminary were those of excitement and surprise. Although I had known of GTS since my own seminary days, I had only visited it once before. My first official act was to hire an administrative assistant, an experienced secretary who was approximately my same age. Over the years Kate Treasure became for me not only a trusted colleague but a confident, critic, and source of wisdom. She not only assisted me in the heavy volume of correspondence which often took on burdensome proportions, but she managed my schedule and appointments with sensitivity to my own needs and that of the seminary community. I inherited a director of management and finance, a director of development and alumni/ae relations (whose memory for names was for me of critical importance), and a director of admissions and student affairs, all of whom comprised my senior administrative staff. On the faculty side there was a sub-dean, a largely ceremonial office which had traditionally been given to the senior member of the faculty. The major function of the sub-dean was to preside at chapel in the dean's absence. It was

understood that, as dean of the General Seminary, I was not only the chief administrative officer of the seminary, but also, dean of the faculty as well.

As I recall, when I was interviewed for the presidency, little was said about the seminary's actual financial situation, and my lack of experience in financial matters limited my ability to ask the right questions. The seminary had begun work on the renovation of a student apartment building and had borrowed the funds necessary for the project. During 1978 and 1979 interest rates began to soar, and we were faced with costs we could not meet. It was decided to borrow from our endowment to pay off the construction loan which, of course, reduced our income from endowment. We moved from a deficit of \$100,000 to \$500,000 by the end of 1979. At our executive committee meeting in March 1979, our director of finance reported that unless drastic action was taken we would use up all of our unrestricted endowment. I was learning about cost-accounting fast. Before that meeting ended, a member of the committee (a former president of Colgate University) leaned over and said to me, "Jim, this is where you earn your spurs." And what I learned later was how important it was having someone as honest and experienced as this board member was to advise me. When a change of jobs forced his retirement from our board of trustees, I made the mistake of not insisting that he be replaced with an experienced educational administrator of comparable stature.

The challenge we faced as an institution was to reduce spending and increase income before the end of the next budget year. As I was pondering how best to move, I was given a gift that was almost too good to be true. Just a short time after the news of our financial situation was made public, I received a call from Robert W. Lynn, then vice president for religion of Lilly Endowment. He told me that I, along with a number of other new presidents of theological seminaries, had been selected for a \$25,000 grant to be used for getting whatever help I needed in strengthening my role as a chief administrator of the seminary. No telephone call could have come at a better time. With that grant I was able to hire Chuck Nelson, a partner of Peat, Marwick, and Mitchell, to work with me as a consultant in those areas of financial planning and management where I was so weak. Over the next year a plan was devised to bring our budget into balance by the academic year 1982-83. This plan required that two faculty members be let go and that we take immediate steps to launch a 12 million dollar capital funds campaign to rebuild our declining endowment. The implementation of the plan was carried out with the approval and support of the board, but when the word got out about the possibility of layoffs, the entire seminary was up in arms. Faculty groups and student groups met to devise alternative ways to deal with our problems, all of which I encouraged. As

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anxiety mounted, anger toward me mounted as well. In addition to Chuck Nelson, I recruited three persons to meet with me as an unofficial “council of advice.” I asked Mac Gatch, then dean at Union Theological Seminary; Bill Webber, president of New York Theological Seminary; and Fredrica Thomsett, the director of the Board for Theological Education of the Episcopal Church, to help me through the perilous waters that surrounded me. And help they did! The plan worked, and I did indeed “earn my spurs,” but not without the help of those wise and experienced colleagues who were willing to give their help and support.

Community Building

When I arrived at the General Seminary in the fall of 1978, student and faculty morale was low, trust seemingly non-existent, and the reputation of the seminary badly damaged by the battles that had resulted in the forced resignation of my predecessor (who remained as a tenured member of the faculty). Although our budget problems took an immense amount of time, I knew we could never raise the kind of money we were after unless our own house was in order and our public reputation improved. I began work seeking to strengthen the board of trustees, I met regularly with students and faculty both as a group and as individuals, and I accepted invitations to speak at churches and at clergy conferences whenever an invitation came. My efforts, and the efforts of others, soon began to pay off. While we were in a state of internal turmoil my monthly meeting with the student body was lively and well attended. When the tension subsided, attendance at these meetings began to dwindle, and I made a mistake not to continue these meetings on a normative basis throughout my tenure. It became obvious that if meetings were only called when there was trouble, there was no organized space in which trouble could be anticipated before it occurred.

In 1980-81 two things happened that reflected what I soon discovered to be an example of the unpredictable nature of life in an educational institution. No matter how well one plans—and planning is critical—much of what goes on is in response to those surprises one had not anticipated. In the academic year 1980-81, we had a record enrollment of 171 students, and I asked for the resignations of two full-time faculty members (one of whom was tenured). We were able to reduce the faculty by abolishing two positions. I decided to abolish positions that we could fill in other ways. As we went through this painful process, I met regularly with the president of the student body, a senior member of the faculty who had served a period of time as acting dean, and the chair of the executive committee of my board. It was also during this time that

I embraced fully my roll as dean of the chapel. Unless I was out of town, I was present for all scheduled services in the Seminary Chapel (which included Morning Prayer every morning and Evensong every evening). The one exception I made was that I did not attend the Eucharist on a daily basis, but only on Tuesdays and Fridays which were understood to be “community celebrations.” Although I found the worship tradition of the seminary more formal than I was used to, and extremely difficult to change (one of my regrets), I nevertheless believe that my own commitment to a regular discipline of worship not only fed me personally, but gave me authority that I would not have had without it. I believe that the president of a theological seminary must assume the role of the spiritual leader of the community in order to hold up in a public manner what a seminary community is about.

Faculty Relations

One thing I learned very quickly in my early years at the General Seminary: when the faculty was feeling appreciated and supported, not only was my life easier, but the morale of the entire seminary was positive. When the faculty was at odds with one another (which could happen at the “drop of a hat”) or with me, negative energy was released that was very hard to overcome. Over the years the General Seminary has boasted a small but top-quality faculty. The seminary’s reputation and the quality of its doctoral programs have been a drawing card for scholars and teachers with established reputations. Like all institutions, however, faculty who have been in an institution a long time, like everyone else, can rest on their laurels. In 1978-79 this was in part the problem we faced. Through the efforts of the Rev. Dr. Parks, the rector of Trinity Church, Wall Street, and a member of the seminary’s board, the tenure system was challenged in a way that resulted in some helpful changes in faculty policy. There were some on the board of trustees who wanted to have the system of tenure abolished. The faculty, of course, was adamant that it remain in place. The result was a change in seminary policy that made it possible for tenured faculty to be dismissed when it could be shown that their teaching effectiveness was consistently below expected standards.

In order to overcome the mistrust between faculty and administration that I had inherited, I made a concerted effort to build a strong relationship with the faculty both as individuals and as a group. My wife and I entertained the faculty in our home. I met individually with each faculty member on an annual basis to talk about their career goals and how they could be supported. Looking back, I realize that it was when I let the pressure of fundraising and other outside concerns cause me to drop these meetings that troubles began. In January 1980,

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I went with the faculty and faculty spouses on a three-week study trip to the Holy Land. The trip had been planned and funds raised to strengthen relationships among the faculty and between the faculty and me. The trip was an immense success and made it possible for us to get through the next semester and the layoffs without coming apart. Although I never received public support from the faculty during our first crisis together, I did receive notes from individual faculty members letting me know that I was in their prayers. It was this sense of collegiality, as tenuous as it was, that more than anything else allowed me to commit myself to the long haul.

Personal Reflections

I remember a teacher I had when I was a student at the Virginia Seminary who was fond of reminding us that the key to personal growth lay in our capacity to make life itself the curriculum from which we learned. This was certainly true in my ministry at the seminary. Thanks to a supportive board of trustees, when I needed help I was encouraged to get it, and I found I needed help more times than not. I could not have done the job that was expected of me without the assistance of others who in various fields knew more than I did.

At no other time in my ministry, however, did I feel more alone than during those days when I had been called upon to “earn my spurs.” When the tension was particularly high I used to slip away and add up the letters I had received in the pro and con categories to see how I was doing. I stopped the practice when a psychiatrist friend of mine reminded me that both categories reflected more projection than personal feelings about me and that I was wasting my time. I knew, of course, that he was right, but it did not make my feelings of isolation any easier. Maybe the greatest gift the seminary gave me was the capacity to stand alone when I needed to stand alone. It was here that I began to experience in a way I had never known before the difference between loneliness and solitude. As Paul Tillich once wrote, “Loneliness is the pain of being alone; solitude is the joy of being alone,” for it is in solitude that we are led to the deep wells of our faith. Conflict and isolation are part and parcel of the life of a seminary president (or of anyone in a position of leadership). Learning to make this work for you is the key not only to effectiveness, but to longevity in the job.

These were the personal learnings that came during those early and particularly difficult years. When I had trouble sleeping, I used to get up early and write. Sometimes these were lectures that I had been asked to give at various clergy conferences; sometimes they were notes for the class I taught on

the pastoral ministry; sometimes they were notes to myself. I realize now, although I did not think of it at the time, that my 1981 book, *Ministry and Solitude*, was written more to myself than to anyone else.

The Middle Years (1981-1989)

Administration and Development

If my first years as a seminary president were spent trying to build trust in a fractured community, my middle years were concerned primarily with establishing a financial base that would allow us to build for the future while operating annually in the black. Two events occurred that enabled the seminary to turn the corner. By 1982 the Twelve Million Dollar Campaign for General, authorized by the board of trustees in 1979, had proven remarkably successful while, at the same time, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church passed a resolution calling on all the congregations of the church to give on an annual basis one percent of their net disposable income to at least one of the 11 accredited seminaries of their choice. Prior to this time there had been no systematic support of theological education in the Episcopal Church. The passing of the "1% Resolution" represented a turning point in the relation between the seminaries and the church at large, as well as a turning point in the relation of the seminaries with each other. Not only did the "1% Resolution" result in increased income for the seminaries, it also produced a new era of cooperation and trust among the seminaries (which had worked hard to get the "1% Resolution" passed), and particularly among the seminary presidents. We discovered that our need for each other's support was stronger than our need to compete.

I had hardly begun my ministry at The General Theological Seminary before I was involved in a major capital fund effort. The goal of the Campaign for General was \$12 million. We raised \$10 million and declared the campaign a success. Although I have never considered myself an effective fundraiser, I was able to build institutional trust and attract men and women who believed in what we were trying to do. Fundraising was a major part of my job as the president of the General Seminary. It took an immense amount of my time and an immense amount of time and effort on the part of my wife, time and effort for which she received minimal recognition.

Although our capital fund efforts would not have been successful without my hard-working staff colleagues and competent outside consultants, the key to our success was the result of the efforts of key board members who not only

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developed contacts but encouraged me in my efforts. In particular, without the help of Alanson Houghton, who chaired our first campaign, and Bob Parks and Trinity Church, Wall Street, we could not have begun to accomplish what we did. To this day, it is probably safe to say that few people realize what Robert Parks did for the seminary, and, in many ways, what he did to make my ministry at the General Seminary as fulfilling as it was. Although I found being the president of a seminary a lonely job, it was a job that depended on connections with others. The ability to build these connections is at the heart of what the job is about.

The middle years of my ministry at the General Seminary were years of accomplishment, challenge, and excitement. There was a personal cost, to which I will refer later, but the excitement that I experienced during those years clouded over the pain that was also part of my life, but largely unknown. I was granted my first sabbatical leave during the summer and fall of 1983. In addition to some personal time spent in England, which I very much needed, I enrolled in the Institute for Theological Education Management sponsored by the ATS and staffed by the Riverside Group of the Columbia University Business School. This was an extremely helpful experience that not only changed my sense of who I was as a seminary president, but re-energized me for the tasks that I was facing. In reflecting on some of the things that happened as a result of the Institute, I realize how important an experience it was. In May of 1984 the office of sub-dean was merged with the chair of the faculty academic affairs committee to create a sub-dean for academic affairs, the first academic dean in the seminary's history. Professor Boyce Bennett was nominated by me for the post; his nomination was confirmed by the faculty and approved by the board of trustees. He was given a reduced class load, a raise in salary, and responsibility for the oversight of the faculty and curriculum. The idea was great and much needed, but it took time for the faculty to look on the new sub-dean as a person with authority. Although having an academic dean allowed me to relinquish some of faculty responsibilities, I paid a price for doing so.

In the years between 1984 and 1986, student enrollment once again was more than 175, we were showing an excess of revenues over expenditures (allowing us to begin a steady increase in faculty salaries and the annual reduction of our take-out from endowment), new and younger faculty were hired, and it was noted that during these years we had the highest publication rate of any seminary faculty in the Episcopal Church. It was also during these years that the Instituto Pastoral Hispano, largely through my initiative (which caused problems later), moved to the seminary campus, and we began a

relationship with New York Theological Seminary which resulted in its joining us as a partner in the St. Mark's Library. At this time in my ministry at the General Seminary, our board of trustees was never stronger. In May of 1985 a master plan for the renovation of our aging campus was authorized, and in response to a six million dollar challenge grant from Trinity Church, Wall Street, the Chelsea Challenge was launched to raise the \$12 million necessary to match the challenge we had been given.

Community Building

The strength of the board of trustees during my middle years at the seminary was the result of the efforts of two strong chairs (The Rt. Rev. Robert Rusak, Bishop of the Diocese of Los Angeles, and the Rev. Charles Newbery, the Rector of St. John's Church, Lattingtown, Long Island, New York), careful selection by a revised nominating committee, and our first board retreat. The retreat was planned with the help of the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities (with support from a grant from Lilly Endowment). As a result of the success of this first retreat, the board voted to make an annual retreat a regular part of the January meeting.

In my work with the seminary community during those middle years, two issues emerged as concerns of major importance. The first issue involved our inability to attract African-American students and dissatisfaction with seminary life on the part of those few African-American students that we did have, as well as with African-American alumni/ae that we contacted. The reality was that as an institution we had failed to confront the racism that was reflected in our common life and our lack of attention to concerns that were of particular importance to people of color in our midst. In the spring of 1983 we contracted with Community Change, Inc. of Boston to conduct a racism audit and to help us work with the results. What we learned resulted in a number of policy and curriculum changes that are still in place, but nevertheless, the problem remains. It is difficult for a few minority students to have impact on a largely white, middle-class community unless the issue of institutional racism can be sustained as a high priority in every aspect of seminary life.

The difficulty of dealing with issues of race at the General Seminary was, and continues to be, compounded by the second issue of major importance: the concerns of those gay and lesbian students who represent a strong voice in the life of the seminary community. The make-up and opinions of the faculty and students of the General Seminary reflect the diverse convictions and strongly held opinions of the Episcopal Church itself. The students who are enrolled in

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the M.Div. program are all students who have been approved for seminary by their sponsoring dioceses. If students are able to qualify academically and are approved by their dioceses, they are normally admitted into the M.Div. program. Because there are a number of bishops and dioceses in the Episcopal Church who accept gay and lesbian students for the ordained ministry, gay and lesbian students make up an identifiable group within the student body. Some of these students have been outstanding; others, quite honestly, have been sources of continual conflict, not unlike other students who come to the seminary with strong personal agendas. The problem with the gay and lesbian students in the seminary, as I experience it, was not with the students themselves, but with the tendency within the student body, for whatever reason, to make gay and lesbian concerns the dominating issue in seminary life.

There were some bishops in the Episcopal Church who would not send students to the General Seminary because of what was perceived as too liberal a policy regarding gay and lesbian concerns. Other bishops found our policy, which required that couples living together in seminary housing be married according to the teaching of the church, to be unjust. The policy did clearly discriminate against gay and lesbian partnerships (and is currently being challenged), but at the same time it did allow the seminary to recruit a broad range of students from across the church. I found that over the years every response I made to this issue had to be carefully weighed lest I cause hurt to an individual or hurt to the credibility of the seminary. It was an issue over which I agonized, and still do, because I believe that at the heart of this issue lies a call from God that we have not yet as a church been able to hear. It was in the conflict between my responsibility to the institution, as I understood this responsibility, and my pastoral response to individuals and to the gay and lesbian students as a whole that I know I too often gave off uncertain signals. I own this as a problem of leadership, reflecting my own uncertainty about what was expedient and what was morally right.

Michaelmas Term 1984 marked the year during my tenure at the General Seminary when the energies of the seminary were clearly and passionately focused on moral issues outside of its own community life. We had with us that term as our Visiting Professor of Anglican Studies, the Rt. Rev. Desmond Tutu, then Bishop of the Diocese of Johannesburg, who came to GTS accompanied by his wife Leah. Bishop Tutu's quiet presence in our midst heightened our awareness of the urgency of the church's prophetic witness throughout the world. This had always been of concern, but because of Bishop and Mrs. Tutu's presence, it took on a passionate intensity. In November, just before the

Thanksgiving break, Bishop Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and the General Seminary became in an instant a center of world attention. With an unprepared and undermanned staff, the Seminary was handling telephone calls and inquiries from all over the world. I thought later, how helpful it would have been if someone from the Nobel Prize Committee had given us an instruction book on "What to Do When Someone in Your Institution Wins The Nobel Peace Prize." We certainly could have been better organized, but no one at the General Seminary in the fall of 1984 would have traded the experience for a minute.

Two events the following spring give some indication of how Bishop Tutu's presence affected us. In January our board of trustees, after long and heated debate, voted to divest the seminary's holdings in companies doing business with South Africa. In my 14 years as president, no session of our board was any more honest and passionate. When it was over and the vote was taken, one member, who had argued against divestment, moved that the vote be recorded as unanimous.

The second event came a month later when picketing began in front of the South African Consulate protesting South Africa's policy of apartheid. A petition was posted on the main seminary bulletin board asking people to join in. The response was overwhelming. Students and faculty and administration and spouses and the seminary maintenance crew, board members, alumni/ae, and neighbors all joined in one of the most moving demonstrations I have ever experienced. We prayed and we sang as one community responding in obedience to a common faith. We learned something about the meaning of Christian community on that day that could never have been taught in a classroom. We also experienced as an institution the importance of visiting faculty from other traditions and other parts of the world. From 1984 onward, visiting faculty from around the world have become a regular part of the seminary's teaching faculty.

Faculty Relations

My middle years as dean and president of the General Seminary were most probably the years when my relations with the faculty were the strongest and most creative. During this period the faculty received a major grant from Lilly Endowment for ongoing faculty development. This had an energizing effect on everyone as we worked together to strengthen all that was involved in being a learning faith community.

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It was also during this period that the faculty developed a series of teaching videos on the witness of Anglicanism in the world. The series was entitled, "Hear Thy Servants," and more than 300 copies were sold before the year was out.

Finally, as a result of my experience at the Institute for Theological Education Management, it became apparent to me that if the seminary was to remain strong, we had to build on those elements in our life that enhanced our reputation and add what was missing. One of the most well-known programs the seminary offered was the M.A. and S.T.M. in Spiritual Direction developed by the seminary's Center for Christian Spirituality. We worked hard at integrating the Center into the heart of the seminary's life and gave wide publicity to the special summer and winter programs the Center offered. The three-week degree program in spiritual direction held each summer not only attracted students from all over the U.S., but from other parts of the world as well. The Center for Christian Spirituality had been the creation of Alan Jones, a former member of the faculty. Our problem was to involve the rest of the faculty in its programs so that the Center was no longer a source of competition, but a creative project that benefited us all.

Unfortunately, we were not as successful at integrating the Instituto Pastoral Hispano (IPH) into our common life. The Instituto is an interdiocesan program aimed at training lay and ordained leadership for Hispanic Episcopal churches, meeting all day Saturday and one night a week. With a curriculum shaped by the insights of the Base Communities of Central America and an experience-based method of teaching, the IPH served a real need. In 1985 an evaluation was conducted by Dr. Roberto Gonzalez to assess the effectiveness of the Instituto's program and its plans for the future. In general terms, it was praised for its innovation and criticized for its rather casual concern for the academic side of its program, particularly with regard to those programs advertised as preparing persons for ordination. A key recommendation in the report was that the Instituto move to the campus of the General Seminary where it could make use of the library and the seminary faculty. When this recommendation was made, I was the only representative of GTS on the IPH board. In my excitement over the idea I managed to win the faculty's approval (but not its involvement) and authorization from our board of trustees. The Rev. Maria Aris Paul, the director of the Instituto, was given adjunct faculty status and faculty housing and was invited to attend faculty meetings. For reasons never fully clarified, Maria Aris Paul never came to a faculty meeting and resisted efforts on the part of the faculty to help strengthen the curriculum. The result was a gradual deterioration of relationships that required more and

more effort on my part as a go-between and supporter. In my last years at the seminary I managed to involve more of the seminary faculty in the Instituto's program, but the relationship at the end of my tenure was tenuous at best.

Personal Reflections

Although the Instituto Pastoral Hispano is still a part of the life of the General Seminary, my own lack of clarity in establishing the relationship increased the difficulties that were (and continue to be) encountered. By failing to document every agreement at every step of the way, I contributed to the confusion. In retrospect, I realize that in an effort to be supportive, I bought into the casual atmosphere that I mistook for lack of strong convictions and expectations on the part of IPH. I also learned from the experience how necessary it was to involve members of the faculty at the very beginning of our negotiations so that I was not seen as the IPH's principal supporter.

In commenting earlier on my middle years at the General Seminary, I made note of personal pain. At the time that the seminary was the strongest, my marriage of 30 some years was undergoing immense stress. My heavy involvement in the demands of my job certainly contributed to this as I allowed my preoccupation with my work to blind me to my wife's unhappiness. The more visible I became, the more invisible she became. The more she gave to the seminary, it seemed, the more she was taken for granted. There were faculty members who came to our home for dinner (not many, but enough) without speaking to my wife or bothering to say goodbye when they left. There was a sense that faculty were entitled to whatever courtesies the seminary or the seminary president provided for them. Obviously, there were many exceptions to this and we had colleagues who were both thoughtful and open to us as people, but we were not prepared for the culture we experienced and had to learn the hard way. I had to learn how to reinforce my wife's gifts, and we had to learn together how to protect ourselves. In sharing our experiences with other friends who were in similar jobs, we discovered that our experience was not unique.

My experience at the Institute for Theological Education Management was, I believe, a major factor in what successes I did have during my tenure at GTS. The Institute helped me to see the difference between the pastoral leadership I had known as a parish priest and the role of manager that was required of me as the president of a many faceted institution. As a pastor I was concerned with the quality of life in the seminary community; as a manager I was concerned with the vision question: where are we going and how are we going to get there? In a speech I made to the board of trustees (which had been given previously

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to the faculty and revised) entitled “A Vision Awaits Its Time,” I was able to lay out more clearly than I had done before a vision for the seminary and my understanding of the task of theological education. It produced immense energy within the entire seminary community and resulted in a strategic plan that is still in use. What I regret is not making sure that I had a staff that was able to work with the details that such a plan requires (job descriptions, staff and faculty evaluations, and the like). In retrospect, I believe I did not ask enough of my staff in those areas where I was not as strong as I might have wished.

The Latter Years (1989-1992)

Administration and Development

In the spring of 1988 I was given my second sabbatical leave from my duties as dean and president of The General Theological Seminary. In retrospect I see this sabbatical as marking a turning point in my administration. The sabbatical also marked the beginning of a distancing process that culminated in my decision to resign my position at the end of the Easter Term of 1992.

Prior to my leaving on sabbatical I met with the faculty on an overnight retreat which was funded by our Faculty Development Grant awarded by Lilly Endowment. It was at this retreat that I shared my statement on the future of the seminary, which we worked on together before I presented it to the board. It was an exciting retreat that set a number of things in motion before I left. I returned in time for commencement and the May meeting of our board to begin facing the problems that had begun to accumulate.

In 1989 the seminary began to experience a slow decline in enrollment which, while reflecting trends that were being experienced in all of the Episcopal seminaries, nevertheless, was a sign of a serious problem. During the 1989-90 school year our director of admissions resigned in order to join his wife in New Hampshire, and we began the difficult search for his replacement.

During this time also the Chelsea Challenge had begun to lose energy after a strong start and demanded a renewed commitment from the board as well as myself and our development staff. By 1989, however, we had raised sufficient funds to begin matching the Trinity Challenge Grant and also to begin the long-awaited renovation of the campus.

The master plan for the renovation of Chelsea Square had been designed by David Helpren, a New York architect noted for his work in restoration. The plan he presented was imaginative but beyond our capacity to fund, but it did give us a plan with which to work. By 1992 a major part of the campus had undergone significant restoration. A new heating system had been installed,

and bathrooms were installed in apartment units that had previously been dormitories designed for use in the late 19th century. Plans were developed for the modernization of St. Mark's Library and meeting space enlarged for the use of the Instituto Pastoral Hispano. It is difficult to believe that we accomplished as much as we did. One contributing factor was our decision to hire a construction manager to oversee construction and work with the architect (not without tension, I might add). Thanks to the flexibility and imagination of David Helpren and the efforts of our on-sight manager to minimize costs, we were able to do a lot with a little.

As our efforts at restoration became more obvious, the Chelsea Challenge picked up energy. In an effort to shift emphasis to our capital campaign, I had hired a new director of development when the Chelsea Challenge had begun. I did this by moving our previous director of development to a newly created position of director of operations, aimed at tightening up administrative procedures within the seminary. This move, although giving strength to our capital campaign, created internal problems that were never fully resolved. Our previous director of development had served on the seminary staff for more than 25 years. I had hoped that this move would help lessen some of the burdens of my office while providing more experienced help with our campaign. This never fully happened as I had anticipated.

Reinforced by an imaginative development effort which we called The Grand Design (the name given to the original plan of the seminary created at the end of the last century), our capital effort picked up steam, largely through the tireless efforts of Willoby Newton, our new director of development. By October 1991, we had raised 5.2 million dollars and called the campaign a success, while acknowledging that we had fallen far short of what had been clearly an unrealistic goal. During this period Willoby Newton retired and we had to search for his replacement. Although the new director of development came to us with good references, it was clear that we had not paid sufficient attention to the warning signals, and our internal problems took on a new intensity, ending with the decision to fire our director of development after two years, which I did just before leaving.

Community Building

If internal tensions were present in 1989-90, they were intensified in the fall of 1990 with new incidents that touched every aspect of seminary life. We were confronted by a city-wide strike that involved our maintenance staff, and one of our faculty was charged with the sexual abuse of a student.

Reflections on Fourteen Years as a Seminary President

During my years as the president of the General Seminary I had made a special effort to strengthen relationships between my administration and the 12-person maintenance staff (who were mostly Black) who cleaned and maintained our campus. They had participated in the racism audit and had become more and more involved in the life of the seminary. Their participation in the city strike was the result of delayed contract negotiations with the union that we were powerless to resolve. The effect, however, was to create division among our maintenance staff itself—some who favored the strike and others who did not—and among the faculty and student body. Some of the student body joined the picket line in protest against what they perceived to be unfairness on the part of the seminary, and others were vocal in the seminary's defense. With other members of my staff I spent countless hours seeking to bring the conflict to a just resolution which was accomplished after three months. Through a series of community meetings and planned intercessions in the chapel, we were then able to bring about a genuine spirit of healing involving everyone who had been involved. Throughout this entire episode I found myself more and more grateful for every conflict resolution workshop I ever attended or led.

While the strike was going on a student came to me with charges that he had been sexually abused by a member of our faculty. The abuse was difficult to document because it involved physical contact—not overtly sexual—in an instruction session on self-defense. I took the charges seriously and began to gather all the information I could. I met with the student and the faculty member as well as with others who were able to shed light on what actually happened, all the while, trying to keep rumors to a minimum in order to protect both parties involved. The faculty member was cleared of all charges and reconciled with his accuser, thanks to his own maturity and the effective pastoral work of a number of people. The incident resulted in the development of our first policy on Sexual Harassment and Abuse which was shared with the entire seminary community and ultimately with other seminaries as well. When the incident was reported to me, I turned immediately to a specialist in this field for counsel and support, realizing how explosive the situation could become. I could not have worked through the situation as I did without outside help.

Faculty Relations

In the years between 1989 and 1992 my relations with the faculty were more difficult than at any other time in my administration. My preoccupation with the internal problems which I have described certainly made me less available to

the faculty. I was also heavily involved in our capital campaign. As a result, tension increased between me and my sub-dean which was enhanced by my own lack of clarity about what the sub-dean was expected to do. The difficulties this produced caused the sub-dean to resign and a new sub-dean to be nominated by me, confirmed by the faculty, and elected by the board of trustees. The change turned out to be a good one for all concerned and of immense help to me both personally and professionally. We were able to rework the job description for the sub-dean for academic affairs in a way that gave this position far more authority than it had had before, and which, as a result, relieved me of a significant area of responsibility. In retrospect, it is obvious that this should have been done sooner.

My actual conflict with the faculty broke out over the question of salaries and benefits. What began as a clarification from the finance committee of the board of trustees, soon became, from the faculty's point of view, an unapproved change in the faculty's contract. The more I attempted to clarify the issue, the harder the lines between board and faculty became, resulting in intense anger toward me. The issue was finally resolved, but the anger remained. I discovered later that a lot of the discontent was being fueled by a faculty member who, unbeknown to me, was openly critical of my leadership both with students and in the wider church. This all broke out into the open at a faculty retreat in January 1991 when I was verbally attacked by two members of the faculty for what they perceived as faults with my leadership. Some of what was said I could own, but not in the way it was presented, and I realized then how little energy I had for the hard task of rebuilding the trust that had been lost. Fortunately, through the efforts of the new sub-dean and a student-faculty committee, the climate began to change by the end of 1991 Easter Term. When I announced my resignation the following fall, I had the good fortune of being able to do so from a position of strength.

Personal Reflections

It has been an interesting experience looking back over my 14 years as dean and president of the General Seminary from the perspective of a two-year absence. I was not aware at the time of the distance that had begun to grow after returning from my sabbatical. What it says, loud and clear, is that when there is a perceived vacuum in the leadership of an institution, disharmony begins to develop throughout the institution itself. My own emotional withdrawal diminished the energy that was necessary to help the seminary community move toward implementing the vision that it had adopted.

Reflections on Fourteen Years as a Seminary President

If I were to begin again as a seminary president, or as the head of any institution, for that matter, I would pay close attention to such details as clear policy statements that were readily accessible, job descriptions and regular evaluations, and especially written records of all verbal transactions with anyone. To make certain all this happened I would be sure someone on my staff had this responsibility.

I am deeply grateful for all the learning opportunities that were given me to better understand what I had been called to do. I would have benefited, however, with more help in the area of capital funds solicitation. I did what I had to do, but I would have done it better with careful preparation and followup.

Being the president of a seminary is a lonely job, although a fulfilling one. It took me a long time to know what I could expect or ask of my colleagues in the seminary community, and until this happened, my wife and I were both primed for constant disappointment. I finally learned how important it was to take the time necessary to nurture relationships with family and friends, including trips away from the seminary where my wife and I had time alone together.

I found the prestige and contacts that came with the job a heady experience that I had to come to terms with. I miss some of that stimulation, but also after a while I began to find it exhausting. I found the intellectual life of the seminary challenging and personally stimulating, and well as the contact I had with students. I was enriched by the regular routine of seminary worship and was able to acknowledge in my final report to our board of trustees that I was leaving the seminary with a deeper faith than when I began. This, I believe, is a testimony to the integrity and importance of theological education in the life of the church.

Reflections of a Pastor/President

Douglas W. Oldenburg

Columbia Theological Seminary

For 25 years I enjoyed a pastoral ministry in three congregations. My first call was to develop a new congregation in a suburban area, my second call was to a church adjacent to a Presbyterian college, and my third call was to a large urban congregation. I enjoyed the pastoral ministry and found great fulfillment in it. I was fortunate to serve churches that gave support and encouragement to their minister. In each of them there was a mutual “love affair” between pastor and people. During my pastorates, I developed a discipline for serious study and was invited to teach a few continuing education classes at two Presbyterian seminaries, including Columbia.

During that time, I was asked to serve on the board of trustees of a church-related college (chair of the board for four years) and a Presbyterian seminary. This gave me invaluable experience in the workings of educational institutions. I learned about the financial problems of such institutions, the inevitable tension between faculty and administration, the responsibilities of a board, and the leadership styles of presidents. In retrospect, I am confident that such experiences have had a significant and positive impact on my presidency at Columbia.

During the summer of 1986 the President Search Committee of Columbia Seminary made its first contact with me. I had previously been asked to be a candidate for president of two other Presbyterian seminaries but had declined the invitations for various reasons. This time, however, the invitation came at a time when I was more open to a move. I had served my present congregation for 15 years, our youngest child had left for college, and I was aware that calls to serve congregations become less frequent as one grows older (I was 51 years old). I also wondered whether I would burn out and/or whether the positive pastor/people relationship would diminish and thus the church suffer if I remained pastor of the church until I retired. After discussion with my wife, it seemed appropriate to be open to a new call and challenge. We expected it to be a call to another pastorate.

When initially approached to consider being a candidate for the presidency, I had little interest. I saw myself more as a pastor than a president and was a little intimidated by academic professors. I had witnessed the enormous problems of presidents of academic institutions and the strained relationships between faculty and administration, and I was not eager to give up a happy pastorate for

such a troublesome vocation. However, I wrote a letter to the search committee outlining my strengths and weaknesses for the position, and in doing so, I began to realize that I did have certain gifts and experiences that could be useful to the office. After the first interview in which the committee asked all the questions, I was given a packet of material which contained, among other things, a "Toward 2000 Report"—the result of a long-range visioning process—that dealt with the question: "What should Columbia Seminary look like in the year 2000?" In reading that report, I began to feel the Spirit moving within me, creating an excitement and desire to become part of a seminary with that kind of vision. Among other things in the report, I was drawn to the way the seminary desired to respond to a changing world, with increased focus on international theological education and the use of developing electronic media.

The most persuasive consideration that prompted my interest and later decision to accept the call was my deep commitment to the church and the growing conviction that nothing is more important to the future of the church than the training of her leaders. I was and remain convinced that the church of Christ has had and continues to have a powerful impact on individual lives, as well as the life of our communities, our society, and our world. I am also convinced that it has not begun to reach its potential and remains a "sleeping giant," and that the most important element in waking up this "sleeping giant" is its leadership—the pastors and lay leaders of local congregations. I was struck by Robert Lynn's assertion that God's script for the church in the 21st century is being written right now in theological institutions of the church. I believe he is right. In thinking through how I wanted to spend the last several years of my vocational life, the conviction grew with me that while there are many worthy causes in the world, there is no greater cause than training women and men to be effective and faithful leaders of the church. As that conviction deepened within me, I could think of nothing more exciting and fulfilling for the remaining years of my active ministry than taking part in nurturing the future leaders of the church. That conviction continues to sustain and motivate me in my role as president of Columbia. It is the one thing that enables me to work through the difficult days without losing heart!

Transition from Pastorate to Presidency

At my request, the board gave me two months to do some intentional preparation for my new role. During that time, I visited several other seminaries and colleges to "pick the brains" of their presidents and administrators. The

experience was very helpful, and I would recommend it to every new president. I also read several books and articles by and about college and university presidents, some of which were recommended by the presidents I visited. Although some insights were gained, I was rather disappointed in the books and articles I read. Far more helpful and absolutely essential was to read the history of Columbia Theological Seminary, to listen to older faculty share their stories, to talk with alumni/ae, and become immersed in the traditions and ethos of the seminary. I am convinced that both new pastors and presidents need to “get in touch” with the history and culture of the particular institution they serve. During that two months of preparation, I also read several books that had been written about theological education. I found most of the literature rather esoteric and more appropriate to a university seminary than the one I was called to serve. In order to begin knowing my faculty, I invited each of them to share with me a book, article, or sermon they had written which would give me an insight into who they were and what they were passionate about. Again, I found it to be most helpful as an initial step in understanding my faculty and establishing a healthy working relationship.

Although my previous experience on boards of trustees and my two months of intensive study were very helpful in preparing to become a seminary president, I am absolutely convinced that my 25 years as a pastor of a congregation was the most important preparation. I agree with Donald Shriver, retired president of Union Seminary in New York, who wrote: “People ask me what was my best preparation for being a seminary president, and I tell them what they may not like to hear: being the pastor of a local Christian congregation.”

During my pastoral ministry, 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 fundraising. 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 Columbia 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.

The pastoral ministry helped develop within me a sensitivity to people and a capacity to listen and respond with empathy to their hurts and concerns. I find it essential that a president be a good listener and sensitive to the needs of others. Some members of the faculty and staff look to the president as their “pastor.” Furthermore, a president needs to practice the virtue of humility and be willing

to ask for and receive the counsel of others. Relationships with faculty members are strengthened when they know the president respects and trusts them enough to take them into his or her confidence and seek their advice.

I have been surprised to discover how often individual members of the faculty and staff need a personal word of support and encouragement from the president. Someone said that saying “thank you” to everyone for everything they do to serve the mission is a cardinal spiritual discipline of an institutional leader. Unlike the pastorate, professors are not affirmed on a regular basis for their good work, and the president needs to be a frequent source of encouragement. A president can hardly say “thank you” or “well done” too often, both to the faculty and staff as a whole, and to each member individually. They need to know that the president is proud to be their colleague and grateful for their good work and commitment to the seminary. One president wrote that “if you are game for such a job, you must be willing to say ‘thank you’ many more times than ‘thank you’ is likely to be said to you.”

Being the pastor of a large and affluent urban church for 15 years enabled me to get over my fear of asking wealthy people for large gifts. I developed skills in how to cultivate such gifts and how to ask for them, and I had a rather successful record in raising funds. Because so much of a president’s time and energy must be spent in fundraising, it is essential that he or she feel comfortable with that task and have demonstrated skills and success in the art. The role of the president to raise funds and develop positive constituency relationships has become increasingly important in recent decades for a variety of reasons, and I am convinced it will become even more critical in the future. Being pastor of a church with a number of wealthy people gave me much needed experience in that important role of a president.

It did not prepare me, however, for the large amount of travel which is required for such efforts. A president today must be willing to be away from his or her family for a significant amount of time, and his or her family must be willing to accept this loss. I am grateful I was called to the presidency of Columbia after our children had “left the nest” and my wife had pursued a career of her own. Furthermore, a president must have the physical endurance that will enable him or her to sustain regular travel.

As the head pastor with a large staff, I was able to recruit outstanding staff members and develop a style of staff leadership that has been helpful in my presidency. One of the most critical roles of a president is to recruit gifted faculty and staff. The heart of any educational institution is its faculty, and the president must be deeply involved in the search for and appointment of new faculty and senior administrators. I learned how to do that as the pastor of a large church.

I also learned that the most effective style of leadership and one that “fits” my personality is more consultative and consensus building than autocratic. I have followed the practice I started in the pastorate of meeting with the senior administrative staff of the seminary on a weekly basis for coordination, counsel, planning, and mutual support. While I am charged by the Plan of Government with the administration of the seminary, I rarely make decisions without consulting my colleagues.

The pastorate also gave me some valuable experience in handling conflict. Although the level of conflict in the congregations I served was rather low compared to other churches, we often experienced serious differences of opinion and conviction about important matters. In the seminary community, the increasing diversity among faculty and students provides the opportunity for greater enrichment, but also provokes greater conflict and makes it more difficult to build consensus and a strong sense of community. One of the most important and difficult tasks of seminary leadership today is how to maintain a sense of community in the midst of great diversity, how to celebrate our differences and affirm our unity. I have found that the level of conflict in a seminary community is much higher than I encountered in the churches I served. Yet, I believe the seminary is called to model for the church how a Christian community deals with conflict, how to learn from conflict without letting it become divisive.

I also believe the pastorate (and perhaps life itself) taught me the importance of keeping a perspective on issues. It is so easy in a seminary community, as in a congregation, to lose perspective, to see every battle as Armageddon, to “make mountains out of molehills,” to lose sight of the human factor, to see every defeat as final, or to take undue pride in every victory. Seminary students and faculty often have passionate convictions and sometimes insist that others share their particular passion. Perspective, humility, and a healthy psychological resiliency are critical virtues in a seminary president.

I have discovered that most pastors 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. I have often been asked to lead retreats for pastors which is helpful in strengthening the relationship between the seminary and local congregations.

Although the transition from the pastorate to the presidency has been a positive one for me, there are many things about the pastorate that I miss. I miss the discipline of writing and preaching a sermon each week to the same congregation. Although I am preaching to different congregations about three times each month, I am not writing as many new sermons as I did in the pastorate

(each week) and thus not engaged in the daily discipline of study which is required. I can identify with John Killinger's reflection about that discipline after he had moved from the pastorate to become a professor at a seminary:

"I hadn't realized how much this discipline formed the spine of my existence each week Meditating on the possibilities for the message, zeroing in on one, musing my way through it, sitting at the typewriter, feeling the exultation as it took shape, passing it through my system until I was ready to preach it, and then, as the climax, climbing in the pulpit on Sunday morning, looking at all the upturned faces, and delivering it as honestly and forcefully as I could—all that had become the core of who I was."

I have discovered a profound difference in preaching to an unfamiliar congregation each Sunday and preaching to the same people whom you have come to know and love and who know and love you. Of course, when I preach today, I know those strangers in the congregation are part of the human condition and the Body of Christ, but I do not know them in the personal and individual way I knew the members of my former congregations. When I wrote sermons, I often had the life experiences of specific people in mind, having been their pastor and sharing in their hurts and joys. That direct and immediate connection between the preacher and the people is missing when one preaches at a different church each week. And I miss it. Furthermore, I find that I do not preach on the critical social issues as often as I did in the pastorate. Before one can preach the prophetic Word of God and expect to be heard, one must be a pastor to the people, and preaching at a different church each Sunday prohibits that relationship.

I also miss the spiritual nourishment I received from worshiping with the same congregation each week. I did not know it at the time, but I have discovered the degree to which the weekly liturgy and music in a beautiful sanctuary with the same people nourished my soul. Columbia Seminary has chapel each weekday and I participate whenever I can, but somehow I have not been fed through that worship experience in the same way I was in the pastorate.

During my pastorate, I found a sense of joy and fulfillment in the pastoral ministry: visiting the sick and dying, counseling with married couples encountering difficulty, responding to crisis situations, participating in the joy of baptisms and marriages, hurting with those who hurt, and conducting funerals. To be invited and expected to take part in people's lives at all the critical moments is one of the awesome responsibilities and privileges of the pastoral

ministry. It often gives the pastor a strong sense of “making a difference” in someone’s life. Although the president of a seminary does have an important pastoral role, it is not the same or as extensive as in a local congregation. In my last pastorate, I participated in about 40 weddings and 40 funerals each year, and in the seven years of my presidency, I have participated in two weddings and no funerals. There is a part of me that misses the pastoral ministry.

I also need to acknowledge that I sometimes miss the regular expressions of support, affirmation, and gratitude that the pastor receives. Whether authentic or not, parishioners are always affirming the pastor, expressing appreciation for a sermon or for a pastoral visit. As president, I have had to remember that faculty are trained and called to be “critical thinkers” and they exercise that calling rather consistently. I am glad that I was called to the seminary after I had developed a healthy level of self-confidence and had learned to handle criticism, because it would be hard to sustain a fragile ego in a community of “critical thinkers.” Although the president does not receive the same level of affirmation and support from the seminary community that most pastors experience from their congregations, I have found my seminary community to be quite supportive and grateful for my work. Indeed, from listening to other presidents, I am profoundly grateful for the support and affirmation I receive, for it seems to be far more than many presidents receive. Unlike many presidents, I have not felt lonely in my role.

Finally, there are times when I miss a certain “status” in the community. A seminary president enjoys a certain status in the larger church, but very little in the local community. The pastor of a large urban church has a natural constituency of leaders in the community who know him or her. You are recognized and respected and called upon to exercise leadership in the community, and part of your ministry is to the larger community. The president of a seminary does not have that built-in constituency and is often not recognized in the same way. Furthermore, the regular travel required of a president for raising funds and developing constituency relations prohibits the president from becoming very involved in community issues and leadership.

Having shared what I miss about the pastorate, it is important to underscore that I do not regret the decision to accept the call to the presidency of Columbia, nor do I yearn to return to the pastorate. Every transition in life involves giving up something in order to take up something else, and I am more convinced than ever that my decision to accept the call to Columbia was the right one. I have gained far more than I have lost. I have found the work to be extremely challenging and fulfilling and I am profoundly grateful. I remain convinced that I am engaged in one of the most important endeavors in the world!

One can draw from the preceding reflections certain qualities that I believe are important for effective presidents of seminaries: (1) an overpowering belief in the critical importance of theological education and the ability to articulate that vision; (2) a healthy level of self-confidence that does not need constant affirmation and can sustain criticism; (3) a capacity to listen and relate to others, and a willingness to say “thank you” more often than it is said to you; (4) an ability to develop consensus and at the same time exercise leadership; (5) a level of humility that invites and is open to counsel; (6) an effective speaker/preacher and motivator who can represent the institution in a positive way and inspire confidence and commitment to it; (7) an experienced fundraiser who is not hesitant to ask for major gifts; (8) an ability to recruit outstanding colleagues; (9) an ability to live with conflict, to keep perspective, and to nurture community; and (10) strong physical endurance and psychological resiliency. In one way or another, and to one degree or another, the pastoral ministry nurtured those qualities within me.

Sources of Tension

During my seven years as president of Columbia, I have encountered the following problems that create tensions within me and/or within the seminary.

Personnel Issues

The most difficult and often most painful problems that confront the president involve personnel decisions. Decisions regarding tenure or the renewal of a contract or the termination of an employee are often made rather easily and for clear and compelling reasons, but sometimes they involve agonizing choices. Although the president is not alone in making most of those decisions, he or she is ultimately responsible to the board. The decisions are difficult because they sometimes cause great hurt and pain to the person under consideration and his or her family. At times, my heart is in conflict with my head, my pastoral inclinations are in tension with my presidential judgments. As a pastor, I have developed a keen sensitivity to the hurts of people, and I hate to hurt those I am called to love; but as president, I am called to make decisions that are in the best interest of the seminary and that sometimes cause great pain. As difficult as it often is, the president must give a greater priority and weight to the best interests of the seminary than to the best interests of the person under consideration. A president is often called to make very tough decisions regarding people’s lives, and every president needs to be prepared to make such

decisions. At times, they create conflict not only within the president but also among faculty and students. Furthermore, such decisions are often made even more difficult because of the constant awareness and sometimes threat of possible litigation.

Fundraising

One of the major roles of a president today is to raise substantial funds for the seminary. No one should accept the call unless he or she is willing to undertake that major responsibility and devote considerable time to the endeavor. I have found, however, that there are a number of worrisome aspects of the task. For instance, it bothers me the degree to which the need to raise funds colors so many relationships and activities and influences seminary decisions. There is a sense in which a large percentage of what I do—preaching in churches, speaking at presbytery meetings, developing affluent friends for Columbia, being a member of Atlanta Rotary—is directly or indirectly motivated by the need to raise money for the seminary, and I dislike that. There is always a temptation to see major donors exclusively as donors, rather than persons who need friendship and whom you need as friends regardless of their financial contribution to the institution. I imagine that many wealthy people are constantly suspecting that the principal reason others show interest in them relates primarily to their money, and I am afraid they are right. I struggle with that aspect of my work, but I don't know how to avoid it.

I also resent the intrusion of fundraising concerns in decisions regarding campus programs. For instance, I remain fearful that if Columbia Seminary takes an active role in raising the issue of the ordination of gays and lesbians and educating our students and faculty on the subject, we will run the risk of alienating some of our conservative major donors and jeopardizing a number of significant gifts. I am afraid that our effort at educating ourselves and the church on the issue will be interpreted by some as advocacy for a position they deplore. Being an educational institution of the church, we simply cannot avoid educating ourselves on the critical issues confronting our church and society, but I remain concerned about its impact on giving to Columbia.

It was very disappointing to discover that a major foundation to which we had sent a grant proposal for one million dollars was not likely to give money to an institution unless it sold its products exclusively. Furthermore, the board of the foundation would be making the decision regarding our proposal at the very time an article would appear in a journal associated with Columbia that was critical of the corporation that has funded the foundation. It is very tempting

to allow the urgency of raising resources for the institution become the controlling factor in many important seminary decisions. But what does it profit a seminary if it gains millions for its endowment and loses its soul?

Time and Budget Allocations

Every conscientious person struggles with how best to allocate one's time, and presidents are no exception. How does one balance the many competing and legitimate claims on one's time? How much time should I spend with students, either teaching or in informal gatherings? How much time should I spend with faculty, with board members, with prospective donors, with my wife and sons? How much time should I spend in personal study, reflection, or rest and recreation, and how much time traveling outside the campus, building up constituency relationships, preaching in churches or conducting retreats? How much time should I spend engaged with the faculty in revising the curriculum? How much time should I allot for community leadership and involvement with the governing bodies of the church? Every president will struggle with such questions and come to different conclusions, partly based on the needs of the institution and one's own personal proclivities and gifts.

One of my sons recently asked me, "Where do you think you are having the greatest impact at the seminary?" I quickly answered, "When I am with students." And he asked, "Are you spending much time with them?"—knowing the answer was "no." Upon further reflection, however, I would have to acknowledge that in the long run, the greatest impact I can have on Columbia Seminary is to undergird its financial base, to build up its endowment, to strengthen its relationship to the church, and to recruit and keep outstanding faculty. I spend a great deal of my time in those efforts.

I also find that I have a tendency to spend too much time on relatively trivial matters about which some students (and sometimes faculty) become agitated. In order to "stay in touch" with students and faculty, I have a monthly period of "conversation with the president" which is open to students and faculty to bring their concerns and questions. When a president maintains such open communication with students and faculty, he or she is sometimes confronted with issues that do not seem very "presidential," but about which students or faculty feel strongly. It is easy to become absorbed in such issues and exhaust both time and energy in resolving them.

Tensions always surround budget decisions, for an institution never has sufficient funds to meet all its needs and underwrite its visions. How much of the budget should be allocated to increasing financial aid for students, to increasing faculty salaries, to new faculty or staff positions, to strengthening

existing programs or starting new ones, and to much needed maintenance and capital improvements? Strong arguments can be made for each item in the budget, and tough decisions have to be made. Furthermore, how much annual income should be taken from the endowment so that there is an appropriate balance of meeting current needs and strengthening the financial future of the seminary? There are no easy answers to such questions, and although the president does not make those decisions without important input from colleagues, he or she is ultimately responsible for making budget recommendations to the board for approval.

“Program Sprawl”

The recent report of the Special Committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to Study Our Theological Institutions warned about the dangers of “program sprawl” at our seminaries. During the past several decades, the seminaries have started a variety of new programs to meet the needs of the church—advanced degree programs, evangelism programs, media programs, lay institutes, Hispanic and Asian American programs, extension programs, and so on. The danger is that such programs can drain the financial and personnel resources of the seminary and thus diminish the quality of our primary tasks of training future leaders for the church and being the church’s intellectual center. On the other hand, however, the seminary exists to serve the church, and when the church expresses a need for a specialized program, the seminary is prone to respond, especially when funds are offered for the proposed program. I have often found it difficult to know when to say “no” to a proposed new program that will obviously serve the church in an important way and for which sufficient funds are provided or promised.

Balancing the Dual Character of a Seminary

There is always a tension in balancing the dual character of a seminary such as Columbia. We are both a professional school and a graduate school; we are committed both to the church and to the academic guilds. Faculty are called to be both servants of the church and intellectual scholars engaged in research. At one level, it is clear that their first calling is to serve the church through their scholarship and teaching, but sometimes those claims compete for their time and energy. How much time should a faculty member be asked and expected and willing to give to teaching and preaching in the local church or serving on presbytery committees, for example, and how much time to research and writing? This dual character of the seminary also has impact on the curriculum: how many courses should be devoted to developing practical skills for ministry

(professional school), and how many courses devoted to more theoretical pursuits (graduate school)? Much of the rhetoric today is to insist that the two are blended together, but the tension remains.

Institutional Leadership and/or Academic Leadership

In recent years, I have wondered whether I have given too much of my time to what I will call “institutional leadership and development” (constituency relations, fundraising, etc.) and too little time to “academic leadership.”

All of us at Columbia have been disappointed with the progress made in our three-year curriculum review. I am not sure I could have done anything about the situation, but I keep wondering whether I should have been more involved. My particular set of gifts and much of my experience and knowledge do not qualify me to make much of a contribution to the effort, but the progress has been disappointing. I have operated on the assumption that the teaching faculty determines the curriculum and the president’s primary role and influence in academic matters is through the appointment of faculty. I have tried to have some input into the process and have kept my finger in it, but I have not exerted a heavy hand.

Sources of Support

I want to conclude these reflections of a pastor/president by mentioning some important sources of support I have experienced during my tenure which have kept me from feeling “alone” or “lonely” in the position, and for which I am most grateful.

My Wife

As always, I remain indebted to my wife for her constant love and support. Although she has a career of her own, she is always ready to help in whatever way she can, hosting a dinner party or reception, or just listening when I need to share. I cannot imagine my life, or my life as a president, without her.

Earlier in my tenure, when she was not employed full-time, she prepared and hosted many dinner parties for faculty, staff, and board members. She also frequently traveled with me on weekends. After several months of this involvement, she felt the need to pursue her own career in order to make a contribution to the broader community and to become rooted and involved in a local church, thus ending the weekend travel. I have supported this decision and the seminary community has affirmed it as well. Although she still hosts an occasional

reception and dinner party for the seminary, her involvement has necessarily been curtailed. Once or twice a year she will travel with me during the week or over weekends, but generally she remains at home involved in her own vocation and local congregation. I acknowledge the difficulty of feeling “rooted” in a church when you are visiting a different congregation each Sunday. I also acknowledge her need (and mine) for such involvement in one congregation.

My wife and I plan one weekend a month to go to our lake house in order to “get away.” We usually spend holidays and some vacation time there as well. It has proven to be an invaluable time both for us individually as well as for our marriage.

The Vice Presidents and Administrative Assistant

I have found great support from my vice presidents as we meet once a week and share common concerns. Although we meet in order to talk about the seminary, they have proven to be a primary personal support group, and I value their friendship and our time together. We enjoy working together, and I am extremely proud and fortunate to have such an excellent “team” of colleagues in the administration of the seminary.

My administrative assistant is a “gem.” Her delightful spirit, her efficiency and productivity, her vast knowledge of the seminary, her anticipation of my needs and desires, her gentle reminders of things that need to be done, and her personal support have proven invaluable to me. If I could give one thing to a new president, it would be an administrative assistant like the one I am fortunate to have.

The Faculty

Unlike many presidents, I have felt genuine support from the faculty, both as a whole and from individuals within the faculty. On several occasions, I have received notes from faculty members affirming my work and expressing appreciation for my leadership. Some of them have come by my office just to “see how you’re doing,” and I appreciate such expressions of concern and support. One of my goals for the coming year is to take each member of the faculty to lunch for private conversation. I am convinced that those relationships are of critical importance for a president.

The Board of Directors

My board of directors has given me outstanding support. I meet rather frequently with the chairman of the board, and we talk on the phone even more

frequently. Whenever the board meets, I feel once again its love for and commitment to Columbia and its support of its president.

The Students

During my tenure at Columbia, I have felt the strong support of several students. A few of them have dropped by my office from time to time just for a friendly visit and to express their concern and support for me as a president and a person. I am grateful for such expressions.

The Presidents of Other Presbyterian Theological Institutions

Whenever we are together for a meeting of the General Assembly Committee on Theological Education or for our annual Presidents' Meeting, I feel the support of my colleagues. We share common problems as presidents and come to know one another as persons.

My Faith and Convictions

Perhaps my greatest source of support comes from my faith and deep conviction about the importance of what I am doing. My strong faith in God's unconditional grace provides me with an inner sense of security that enables me to receive criticism, make difficult decisions, accept my own limitations and vulnerability, keep balance and perspective, and place the question of personal "success" on the sidelines. I was called to be president at age 52, and I am glad that I was no younger.

My deep conviction about the utter importance of training future leaders for the church enables me to live with all the daily frustrations that inevitably come to presidents.

I have found that keeping that "big picture" before you is critically important for a president if he or she is to avoid becoming overwhelmed with the daily problems and to continue giving all the time and energy which the calling requires.

It is also important to have a sense of history and a confident hope for the future. Every president knows that he or she "builds on foundations laid by others," and we are called to lay foundations upon which others will build for the greater glory of God.

The President as Pilgrim

Donald W. Shriver, Jr.

Union Theological Seminary

My assignment requires certain preliminary disclaimers. I am to recount what I think I know of the seminary presidency, a job which I undertook for 16 years beginning in 1975. The subject has at least three boundaries that may limit the usefulness of my account to others: time, institution, and personality. The year 1975 had its own political, economic, and religious peculiarities as a time in the history of American higher education; Union Theological Seminary is one seminary only, with its own peculiarities; and Donald Shriver had his own, too. Such boundedness restricts the transferability of whatever here pretends to be wise and true about the work of “the” seminary president.

On the other hand, I am aware that, in the stories we tell each other about ourselves, we ought not to be too sure that we know what will, or will not, be of use to our hearers. Let them decide what to take away from the bundle of observations assembled on these pages; that is a rule that they will follow, in any event.

I have structured the account in three stages: the first, a chronological rehearsal of the peaks and valleys of my 16 years in the job; the second, a summary of the challenges, problems, or tensions I believe I was dealing with; and third, the theology I tried to invoke and practice in relation to this one theological seminary. I have been asked to write as freely as I wish in the first person, and I am to observe certain space limits. So I have mostly avoided my scholarly bent towards references, documents, and footnotes.

This then is how I remember it. The memories of others will have to be consulted in order for these pages to take their place properly in any rounded history of Union Theological Seminary, 1975-1991.

Being Asked to Consider the Job

By the time in early 1975 that a search committee from Union approached me about my possible openness to this presidency, I had been an ordained Presbyterian minister for 20 years. My work as a pastor, university minister, university teacher in interdisciplinary settings, and seminary teacher of ethics had given me every reason to think that I had a vocation for higher education. With the exception of one very tentative inquiry in 1970, however, no one had

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ever treated me as a serious candidate for a seminary presidency, and I had little internal ambition for such a job. On the other hand, everything I had ever done in the church or in education had an administrative component to it, chiefly because I did have a taste for inventing new educational settings and connections between people of different disciplines and professions who, in my view, had something to teach each other. For such persons actually to meet each other in the same room on some occasion took some organizing. I have never hesitated to note that the word “ministry” is at the heart of the word “administration,” a linguistic fact at odds with the typical disdain of most ministers and professors for administrative work.

My surprise at the suggestion that I should be willing to consider becoming president of Union Theological Seminary in New York had other, multiple roots. When a member of its board first told me that he had put my name in the hat, I laughed. (Later I was to compare it to the laughter of Sarah in Genesis 18:12.) I was not a Union graduate; it had never had a southerner as president; with its recent publicized attempts to increase the number of women and Blacks in the faculty and student body, perhaps it should not be turning to another white male president; and then, underneath all this was my anxiety that an institution with so awesome a reputation would surely need someone with more “awesome” talents than I possessed. Added to these suspicions of misfit between that school and me, however, were some more sober considerations that had more to do with fear than humility: The Union board had just dismissed its 12th president after a tempestuous struggle between faculty and student factions; it now conceded publicly that it had a set of grave financial problems; and there was talk on the theological gossip circuit that the institution was really headed for collapse. Anyone who became 13th president of the place might find that an unlucky number indeed. He or she would have to take the job chiefly as burden rather than honor.

Added to these considerations was the fact that I had been in my new job at Candler School of Theology at Emory University scarcely three years, and my wife Peggy was in the second year of prestigious, well-paid professional work with the Atlanta headquarters of the Presbyterian Church U.S.

Second only to my surprise at being asked (in May 1975) to take the job was my surprise in saying “yes” to the invitation. Someone—my friend on the board, I suspect—had told the search committee that I was a person who, like most Calvinists, could be tempted to undertake a number of tasks if I had a sense of calling to do so. By age 47, I had turned down two or three very attractive job offers at Duke, Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, and Harvard, all from

a sense that my calling for the moment lay with what I was doing. (Convinced Calvinists are not bragging when they say such things. The difficult and chancy aspects of a new job have usually added up to a challenge to me rather than a put-off. In a way, the coming of this job offer had a back-of-the-mind chuckle accompanying it: "Well, you say you like challenging jobs; here is one so challenging that you really have no basis for believing you can do it.") At any rate, the Union search committee framed its appeals in terms of calling, and I soon found myself pushed by my own decision-making habits towards treating the negotiation as no laughing matter.

When I finally said "yes," two considerations stand out as primary: One was the quality of members of that board search committee. They had already asked one candidate to take the job, and he had turned them down, saying to them (correctly) that the Union board would have to rewrite its governance bylaws, because for the moment the school was "ungovernable." The board was now taking this advice to heart, promising to return Union governance to greater faculty, presidential, and board control. Long before I came to appreciate the wisdom of this move, I came to appreciate the intellectual, spiritual, and other integrities of members of that search committee. Its chair, John Coburn, was an Episcopal minister of enormous spiritual depth; its lay members had a sense of critical but fierce loyalty to Union that any institution in trouble needs desperately; and their confidence that "we can do it with you" was energizing.

The second reason I finally consented was the theological and historical perspectives of my wife Peggy. By going to New York, she would lose a very fine job, and our family income would drop by an increment or two. At breakfast one morning in late May, we decided to put both our jobs on the table, and it was she who asked the question: "Which of these jobs is the more important in the long run of church history?" She was sure of her own answer: "Union." That was the day we began mentally to pack our bags.

During this period, my colleagues at Emory and various students were well aware that I was thinking about this matter, and I well remember that one Methodist student (with a shrewd Methodist sense of ecclesiastical politics) remarked nonchalantly to me one day: "Why don't you take it? If you succeed in saving the place, everyone will give you the credit. If you fail, no one will blame you, given all the problems." I remember being truly put off by this advice: it had about as little to do with vocation as Peggy Shriver and John Coburn had much to do with it. I remember too, that about five years later, a student at Union asked me, "Why did you accept the job?" "Because I felt called to it," I replied. "Oh, yes," she said dismissively, "but what else?" It took a while

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to explain to her that, while there was plenty of “else,” vocation was the name that had to be given to the sum of it all.

Many times over the next years I was to have the thought: “If I didn’t feel called to this job, I’d give it up.”

The First Year in Retrospect

One of my first impressions of Union was that the gossip circuit had exaggerated its nearness to collapse. The recession of the early ’70s had shrunk the endowment to about \$20 million, but even that was more endowment than many a southern institution could count on. Though maintenance of the buildings had been put on hold, they were constructed like Gibraltar for the ages. And the most impressive resource was people: very bright students and very competent faculty.

It was the relations among the people of the institution that most needed repairing, and it was to take me years to understand how glacially slow the processes of repair would be. The board had handed me a triple assignment: balance the budget, recruit new faculty to fill vacancies, and heal the rifts among people as best you can. To this I added a fourth: institute a program of research designed to evaluate the results of a Union education. At the advice of Robert Lynn, I had made such a program and its financing a condition of my accepting the job, and the board generously consented by raising a fund of \$600,000 for this fourth task. During the coming year, I located Malcolm Warford in St. Louis, and he accepted the position of Director of Educational Research, an office that was to last for the next five years.

When asked about the major problems of being a seminary president, I usually boil them down to two: money and human conflict. In my first year at Union, working on these two simultaneously was very difficult. In 1974, in a four million dollar budget, Union had a \$500,000 deficit. Fortunately for me, acting president Roger L. Shinn had been required by the board to reduce the deficit by half, with the understanding that a new president would reduce it by the other half. But the other half meant more reductions in jobs, and at Union the reversal of the trend of the 1950-1965 era—job expansion—was hard for all to swallow, especially in a faculty and student body long schooled on the rhetoric of social justice. In such a culture, the removal of so much as two out of 25 jobs from a maintenance crew and the elimination of three secretaries from some 50 non-faculty administrative posts were matters of great moment commanding (especially) huge outcries from leaders of the student body.

I look back on my first year as one of great pain, chiefly because of fractious relations between students and me over the matter of budget cuts. Union was only two years away from a governance structure centered in “the Assembly,” and many students—plus administrative staff—assumed that they had the responsibility of ensuring the preservation of justice in the affairs of the seminary. Consciousness of how accumulating erosion of endowment would ensure greater and greater injustice in the future was very low. An institution as great as Union should not have to be embarrassed by these financial exigencies: that was the assumption at work in many of the protests that erupted in that first year.

It was only my first lesson in the difference between the short-range and the long-range views of institutional stability that were to divide the president, with the board, from the perspectives of many students and some faculty over the next 15 years. Without the stubborn backing of the board on the matter of budget-balancing, in fact, my presidency would probably have fallen apart in its first year—beginning with an internal dissolution of my commitment to the job. Many a time during that year I had to remark to myself: “So many people around here are so sure they know what to do about these tough problems. Am I, the newcomer, the only one unsure? Where in all this is a bit of academic tentativeness? A perception of how some of these absolute solutions absolutely clash? Are theologians and their students captive to absolutes? How can any human institution change if every change (or every tradition) has a quality of absolute justice or injustice?” The sum of this rueful thinking was, What ever happened to the spirit of Reinhold Niebuhr around here? (Ironically, out of all the fracas over job cuts that year, we got our first bona fide labor union—among maintenance workers. Few old hands at Union perceived the irony—that paternal labor-management relations still reigned at Union all these years after Reiney’s teaching about balances of power. The irony was compounded by the certainty of some folk in the place that a new southern-born president could not possibly understand the importance of labor unions. (In fact I had been supporting that cause for 20 years in the South and was about to publish a book that dwelt centrally on the under-unionization of southern textile workers.)

Only later did it dawn on me that many of these fractious Union students were still living in the Vietnam era with their automatic reaction to “administrative power.” By 1980 some of the frantic quality had disappeared from organized student opposition to administrative proposals, and this was partly due to the presence of student representatives on governance committees. Both faculty and students on such committees tended to be sobered by what they learned there. I came to value sobriety about finance the more, the longer I stayed at Union.

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In the first month or two, a reporter asked me, "What are you going to do about faculty morale?" I remember stonewalling, knowing that some measures are best done first, then talked about. In those first months I had a conference with every faculty member in his or her office, trying, among other things, to see if there was any validity in the assertion (by Garry Wills in 1974) that Union's faculty was divided between its innovators and its academic "mandarins." There was some such division, but to my mind it had the potential for balanced strengths that every educational institution needs for its reputation and its work with students. Raymond E. Brown's presence among us, as a world-class New Testament scholar, helped us all. So also the presence of a Beverly Harrison and a James Cone: portents of the new pluralism in theological education that Union was already helping to shape. Keeping in mind an overall profile of *institutional* strength, I began to see, had to be a major focus of a president, and I tried thereby to keep on affirming to each faculty member the importance of his or her particular contribution to that strength. In this, I think, I was greatly helped by my own academic training in a multidisciplinary approach to Christian ethics and by my own previous work in two universities.

Becoming the object of hostility from many directions was a new experience for me. Like most southerners, I was shy of conflict, and like most pastors I wanted everyone to like me. That view of myself, of course, conflicted with my readiness to risk conflict in university life and in the Civil Rights Movement of the '60s. I had gradually to adjust myself to the adult view that conflict can sometimes result in improved human relations, especially as others learn that they can quarrel with you, be listened to, and not be punished. The other side of this adult view had to be that universal acclaim is suspect. Further, I had to learn not to take personally every hostile communication that came my way. For better and for worse, a president is the representative head of the institution. The office is the inheritor of all the resentments that may have accumulated against the institution; it is the office where "the buck stops" for all current complaints against anyone in the institution.

That latter fact, however, is subject to some control. I discovered that one baleful legacy of a paternalistic style of administration is that problems travel to the president's desk all too quickly. Delegation-downward was the policy I tried relentlessly to put into place. (People would tell me about the opposite style of Pitt Van Dusen. Mac Warford discovered that Pitt liked to check the menus of picnics, for example. On one of them he scribbled, "You forgot the potato chips.") To do this I had to build an administrative team with members empowered to stop some of the bucks before they got to me. The most important of these appointments was an academic dean, asked to coordinate academic

goals and policies across our seven degree programs whose faculty sponsors tended towards Balkanization. One of the tokens of a certain success which I enjoyed out of all this was the frequent use of the phrase “the administration” on the lips of all sorts of critics in the faculty, staff, and student body. Not often would the phrase become “the president,” for most of the policy recommendations coming out of my office had the stamp of composition by the senior staff. The critics would say that this was running the seminary like a corporation. My reply was that it was a better way than expecting the president to run everything, especially in an institution whose faculty and students were deeply ambivalent about all sorts of administrative power. Unwillingness to leave administrative matters to the administration is rife in academic institutions, of course. Inside critics, and even some board members, often failed to understand how deep is the discrepancy in such institutions between the power and the responsibility of their administrators—quite in contrast to many political, business, and military organizations.

At the end of my first year, before the dust of conflict over budget cuts had settled, I came close to doing what I had never done before: quitting. It was still an ungovernable place, I said to myself, and I am not the one to do something about it. But this route was cut off to me by many counter-inclinations. For one thing, I had never quit in the face of tough problems. For another, I had too many significant allies and supporters in the faculty and in the board. For yet another, I knew what harm would be done the institution if, having fired one president, it could not hold the loyalty of his successor. I kept remembering a remark made to me by a conservative faculty member early in my meeting with him: “You impress me as someone who would put the interest of the institution above your personal interest.” One had to be a bit of a masochist to qualify for that assessment, but I was finding that a bit of masochism had its place in the “presidenting” business. (I remembered a comment of a Freudian whom I had read at Harvard: “A saint is likely to be someone who, in dealing with the sado-masochist complex, adjusts on the masochist side.” But I remembered too that Bonhoeffer said he wasn’t so much interested in being accounted a saint. He would rather find out what it was to be a man of faith.)

Just a year before my having to consider the invitation to Union, I was having lunch with my wife Peggy and was running through the questions that 45-year-olds seem to ask—their career progress, their future now that half of that career is over, and so on. With the wisdom I have come to expect of her—and the humor—she looked me in the eye and said, “I think it is about time that we declared your career a success.” It was the right word. Important to me a year later was the memory of that word, for it was a crucial psychological preparation

for taking on the presidency of Union: *I do not need this job to affirm my worth or my identity*. That thought gave me the freedom to think about quitting at the end of my first year at Union, but it also gave me the freedom to “keep on keeping on . . . to see what the end will be.” That conflation of phrases from the life of the Black church meant a lot to me in that first year. By its end I experienced just enough renewal of my sense of call to Union to make peace with its foibles—and my own. John Fletcher had said to me in June of 1975, “You shouldn’t take the job unless you are willing to spend 10 years at it.” I began to think that a person of faith should keep such a possibility in mind.

1976-1979: Restoration and Lingering Crisis

Perhaps the greatest privilege of my first year was my participation in the appointment of seven new faculty members, including three who would constitute a giant step in the direction of a critical mass of Black scholars in our midst: James Forbes, James Washington, and Cornel West, who, added to James Cone, made us virtually unique among university-related seminaries in this country. Equally gratifying to me was the return of Robert McAfee Brown to the faculty as professor of ecumenics and world Christianity. The latter appointment turned disappointing three years later when he decided to return to California. His replacement turned out to be Kosuke Koyama, who became our first tenured faculty member from Asia.

In 1978 Union got a “high pass” from its decennial evaluation by the visiting team from The Association of Theological Schools and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The tumultuous intervening years at Union had been so publicized that the visitors went away surprised that things seemed so near to settling down. This was an agreeable but partially false surmise, as we were to learn a few months later in the midst of what might seem (it so seemed to me) the minor issue of whether Professor Beverly Harrison, tenured associate professor, should be promoted to full professor. As the controversy turned out, it raised again the knot of issues that had come close to tearing the place apart in the early ’70s: the nature of “real” scholarship, the significance of women in positions of prestige in the faculty, the conflict over teaching methods, and—most of all—the faculty’s power in the appointment process vis-à-vis the president and the board. An appointments committee, by a majority of one vote, had denied the Harrison promotion. Her supporters immediately lobbied the president and the board to overrule the faculty committee, which in fact the board did, in an action that had the whiff of the

decision of the board in 1973 to award the “Tillich” chair to Professor Driver in a move that had bypassed official faculty action.

The entire spring of 1979 was occupied with faculty negotiation with the board over rewriting the by-laws to make sure that no faculty appointment could ever occur without the nominating initiative of the faculty. I believe in retrospect that this was a move of academic integrity, but the controversy drew its real acrimony from the issues and personalities of the early '70s.

It was, in some respects, a larger crisis than the one we faced in my first year, for the crisis involved the president’s own role in siding with the Harrison faction among the faculty, student body, and alumni/ae. Objectively it was another time for thinking that my mandate in the job was over. But in the meantime, I had concluded that Union really did need a president who could outlast controversies and absorb some present acrimony if that was the price of getting over acrimonies of the past. Furthermore, in this meantime we could point to some significant institutional achievements, some of which would be jeopardized by yet another presidential resignation after a four-year tenure: new faculty appointments, a first-ever public capital campaign, the beginnings of a new ecumenical program, plans in the works for renovating our chapel and our prestigious library, and—a personal fortification of my sense of Union’s importance to the world church—a round-the-world trip that brought me into contact with Union graduates in India, China, Japan, and Korea. In the midst of the Harrison crisis, I remember gritting my teeth and saying to myself, “It will take more than the difference between an associate and a full professorship to get me to quit this place.”

Four years at Union had uncovered in me a layer of stubbornness I did not know was there! In addition, I had learned what Dean Robert Handy had often counseled me to consider: that some human conflicts have to be viewed impersonally before they can properly qualify for personal decisions.

Penetrating a Deeper Financial Crisis: 1980-1985

In the summer of 1980, on a plane bound for Romania, I took out my pencil to calculate what effect our recently raised six million dollars would have on the worth of our endowment, and I was dismayed to perceive that, in the several years of two-digit inflation in the late 1970s, while we were raising the money, our endowment lost worth in excess of that six million. Here was an impersonal force in the economy with great personal impact upon any president of a private institution: powerless one might be to control inflation, but responsible one was

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for combatting its erosions. Most people on our payroll wanted protection from a declining income and, while three years of balanced seminary budgets were worth bragging about, one could argue that the balance had been largely achieved by freezing everyone's income and overlooking the shrinkage in our endowment's worth.

As this perception multiplied in our board, we began to take a longer-than-annual look at our finances. At board initiative, we put together a board-faculty-administrative committee charged with asking how Union could define and maintain "educational excellence" in a time when even successful fundraising failed to match our inflationary environment and our educational commitments. The work of this committee was enormously helped by the fruit of the educational research program that Malcolm Warford was then completing. Thanks to his systematic investigations, we had better pictures than ever before of the fit and misfit between Union's traditional academic goals and its finances.

The committee's recommendations were severe: another round of staff job cuts and a similar cut of six positions from the faculty. Staff resistance to the cuts resulted in their organizing our second labor union, and faculty resistance reduced the cut in their number to four and a half. In the midst of all this fiscal-educational pain, I came to two conclusions: a president of Union in this era must get used to not enjoying his successes, sure to be obscured by the onrush of unresolved financial crisis. Further, the president and the board must look at that crisis in five- to 10-year anticipations of its cumulative impacts. Surprising to me was my realization that it had taken me five years to learn that our budget crisis could not be solved by the formula, "raise more money." Some of our commitments were too costly, and some had to be changed. This was clear from our perception in 1981 that the budget cuts of that year would protect us against deficits only until 1986, given even a lowered inflation rate of five percent.

The prediction was coming true, right on schedule, when, in 1985, the chairman of our board recommended that we employ the Cambridge Associates to take a comprehensive look at our finances from the outside. Their calculations, it turned out, further systematized what many of us already knew; but the external status of these consultants validated the bad news and kept it from being considered a fabrication of the internal administration.

We set to work considering some truly radical ways to match our goals to our resources: Move the school to a new location? Merge with another school? Abandon the M.Div. or the Ph.D. program? Turn the faculty and library into a research institute? Give up our residential facilities? Double the endowment? Exploit our real estate by building rentable apartments on our grounds?

The reaction of faculty and students to these proposals—which were advanced with full publicity—was almost uniformly negative, and by now it was dawning on me that the reality-defining side of leadership is an uphill battle and that the problem-solving side will always draw more protest than collaboration. There were tougher choices ahead than most constituents wanted to believe, and in the midst of these accumulating data it was becoming clear that Union Seminary was a profoundly conservative institution. However radical its reputation, internally it did not take kindly to change. We aspired to “cutting edge” theological innovation, but the aspiration assumed a stable, conservative base of support for the enterprise. Adjusting to that all-too-human contradiction was the sad wisdom I began to live with.

In 1985 John Fletcher’s proposed 10 years were up. Knowing that the next three or four years were at least as critical a time in our history as were the mid-1970s, I had to decide if I wanted to endure all the predictable agony ahead. In some searching conversations with our board chairman, he and I decided that it was indeed a possible time to turn over the presidency, but it was likewise a time for invoking my well-educated stubbornness for one more assault on institutional instability, this time from some deeper knowledge than anyone had in 1975.

I opted for one more assault, committing myself inwardly to the conservative side of our now relentless planning agenda: I would do all I could to keep the school from moving away from Morningside Heights and from abandoning either its M.Div. or its Ph.D. program. If and when it adopted either of these strategies, I would know that Union needed a new president.

1986-1990: A Sisyphean Persistence

Those two commitments coincided with those of a large majority of the faculty, and over the next couple of years we so involved faculty in thinking radically about the containment of educational costs that we finally could feel that the faculty understood the reasons why the board had to consider some unpleasant changes in our allocation of resources. The least unpleasant of the changes, the board finally decided, was the turning of one of our large fixed assets—a residence building—into endowment.

Auxiliary to this strategy were a new round of staff job cuts and a plan for a capital campaign to renovate our oldest residence building to make it habitable to a new mix of students not on the scene in 1910. This combination of strategies—shrink the physical plant, renovate part of it, raise nine million

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dollars, and cut staff jobs again—beggared understanding in some quarters of the seminary. Perhaps only those who had been wrestling with our “structural” deficit for 10 years were well equipped to make sense of the combination. It had taken me six years (1975-81) to grasp the interconnections of our budget problems, four more years (1982-86) to explore alternatives to institutional inertia, and it would take another two years (1987-89) to get board consensus on the above combination of actions.

This long struggle came to a head in the academic year 1988-89, and that fall we had the misfortune of undergoing our decennial reaccreditation visit from Middle States and ATS. Administratively speaking, we were now closer to understanding Union’s financial problem and to doing something decisive about it than we had been in 1978. But the visiting team arrived in a month of maximal anxiety among faculty and students regarding the school’s future, and the visitors bought into that anxiety. They even supplied us with sober financial advice that brought coals to Newcastle. It took some months for us to get across the message that the team had not looked deeply enough into what we ourselves knew and what we were preparing to do as stewards of our institutional future. We would have been wise to have delayed the accreditation visit by a year. By then we would have sold our residence hall for a price at the top of the market, and our new capital campaign would have been underway.

The selling of that residence involved a move of eight faculty and their families into other available apartments, and this prospect provoked great hostility. The event supplied me much reason for wondering if educational institutions should ever get into the paternalistic business of providing housing for faculty. Some of the worst sides of human nature came out in this transition. One’s home is naturally a matter of great personal sensitivity, and to be ordered out of the apartment you have lived in for 18 years is no easy matter. Here, if ever in my presidency, I had to impose the long view of institutional necessity upon the shorter views of some longtime members of the faculty. Here, if ever, I had to content myself with the thought that someone has to speak for a constituency that, in the nature of its case, is unable to speak for itself: the potential future inhabitants of the school. The longer one works at being president, it seems, the more visible to him or her become the impacts of the present upon the future. Educating any generation of humans to the welfare of future generations will never be easy. The ecology movement teaches this truth in painful abundance; I learned it definitively at Union Seminary.

Speaking to a budget hearing attended by a large number of students and staff in 1989, I assumed the role of old-timer in saying, “In 1974-76, our predecessors cut \$500,000 out of their four million dollar budget. Had they not

done so we would now be facing a deficit three times the one we are facing, and our endowment would be depleted by millions. We have to be as careful now about those who come after us at Union as they were of us in 1975.”

By now, however, I knew that the budget struggle and its associated human conflicts would not conclude with my efforts, and in deference to my own finitude and that of institutions, I became more certain that the time for my departure as president was at hand. A presidency of 16 years was twice the ATS average. From years ago, I had determined that one ought to choose to resign in an institutional moment when the waves were relatively calm, even if one could not, with Canute, control the tides. My perfectionistic ambitions aspired to leave-taking at the moment when our financial problems were solved on a larger scale than we actually solved them. But I finally had to count that *chutzpah* and give thanks to God for what finitude had in fact achieved.

Furthermore, having managed to teach a class at least once in every academic year since 1975 and having pursued my vocation for interdisciplinary studies with some success in Morningside Heights, I asked the chairman of the board to think with me about the possibility that I could round out my career at Union with a stint of full-time teaching, which would take me to retirement age of 68. Several faculty concurred in this possibility, though I would not have been surprised if they had said, “You taught us that we must live on tight budgets. We can’t afford you.” Happily it was the board’s business to decide if, at ordinary professorial salary, I was affordable. Among other things, such a conclusion to my work here was a way of reaffirming my identity as one who is an academic at heart and not a lover of power. Of course, anyone who feeds on power in academic administration is subject to starvation.

So in June 1990 I announced my retirement as president, my willingness to preside one final year, my eager anticipation of a sabbatical, and equally eager anticipation of retaining my faculty status until 1996.

Some Self-Identified Achievements

My Protestant conscience has often inclined toward plenty of “forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead” (Philippians 3:13) and a complementary inclination to focus on problematic responsibilities still unperformed rather than on fulfilled responsibilities constituting achievement. It is important, my friends and (especially) my spouse tell me, to rein in these inclinations; so in deference to their insight I think it proper to enumerate here some of the tasks that I think we successfully undertook during my time as president of Union. It is important to say “we achieved” rather than “I achieved,”

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for I have never forgotten the administrative wisdom that James Laney, dean of Candler School of Theology, shared with me as I left that school for New York: “You will have to get used to the fact that little you achieve there will be done by you alone. Always other people make things possible.” He did not need to add that leadership is often a matter of persuading others to join a team; it is also a matter of knowing on whom to depend. Over the years one learns to depend upon certain faculty and administrative colleagues with increasing confidence: an academic dean, a vice president for finance, a director of development, a librarian, a faculty committee chair, and a cluster of administrative personnel at many different levels of the organization. (One of our associate deans, for example, has the reputation of being the person in our academic affairs who cares enough about the human problems of students and faculty to solve the inevitable dilemmas that never appear in rule books. He solves many of those problems in ways that keep them from ever appearing on the desk of a dean or a president.)

Presidential memories will always include certain achievements that probably do deserve to be noted as being initiated by the president. Early on, in 1975, I worked to get our food service and refectory back into operation, believing that the low level of community spirit at Union had one source in the false economies behind the closing of the refectory in 1973. The Union Medal—our version of an honorary degree—I borrowed as an idea from Barnard College and helped the board to set standards for the award in urging the nomination of two first recipients: Andrew Young and George Kennan. The accumulation of a modest endowment of \$500,000 for scholarship aid to Third World students was mostly due to my push, and were I to nominate one detail of our numerous building renovations of which I am proudest, it would be a *door* I suggested for construction (through a wall nine bricks thick) between the chapel and the refectory. Its astonishing cost was \$45,000—a fact that might conceivably have given me second thoughts about the idea. The lack of that door was the only oversight I could ever blame Henry Sloane Coffin for. He had built the refectory without due architectural attention to the connection between worship and the breaking of bread in the Christian community.

Added to these early events were others that called for a great variety of collaborators and (often) little budget change: a politician-in-residence (Richard Lamm); a pastor-in-residence (William Finlator); three large conferences on preaching and worship co-sponsored with the Riverside Church, each attended by almost a thousand people; an extended observance of our 150th anniversary as an institution; a national conference of biblical scholars; several performances of drama; and a small student-initiated conference for pastors after the end of the

Gulf War on the challenge of combining prophetic and pastoral leadership in relation to the people caught up in that war.

Laney was right: the most important achievements are usually collective. From my insider's standpoint, I have to testify that the most colossal achievement of these years was the continued existence of Union Seminary on the corner of Broadway and Reinhold Niebuhr Place. Some may say that this is a modest, conservative achievement, but conservation in this case embodied a persistent collective marshalling of hope, financial ingenuity and generosity, and endurance of conflict, in degrees that, as I look back on it all, I find a bit awesome. In it all there stands out the determination of a certain cluster of board and faculty members to respect the past greatness of the school enough to venture some new definitions of greatness and some neglected mundane measures for sustaining it. Union's constituencies had difficulty believing that a great institution could drift into dissolution, and a like difficulty accepting rather ordinary economies that plug the leaks in an ailing budget. Theologically trained people find it easy to bypass money questions. Not permitting them to do so was one of the principal burdens of the presidency in my years at Union. I could not have borne that burden without the frequent assistance and insistence of our board of directors and its two remarkable chairmen—Walter Burke and Thomas S. Johnson.

Part of the achievement of preserving Union as an institution was the maintenance and renovation of various parts of its physical plant. We renovated the library, the chapel, and finally Hastings Hall at a total cost of more than 12 million dollars. The least expensive of these projects—the chapel—was in some respects the most satisfying for me personally, for it was part and parcel of the renewal of regular worship at Union, which had fallen to one noon service a week in the early '70s. Thanks largely to our appointment of Janet Walton as professor and director of worship, worship services quadrupled and became critically important for sustaining the morale of our place.

Undoubtedly, the new faculty appointments of these years were central to sustaining the academic core of the school, and, as every president knows, the task of recruiting faculty includes the task of keeping them once recruited. Two of our faculty stars of this era—Raymond Brown and James Cone—needed special care in this respect, for they were objects of intense recruitment efforts by other schools. We won both of these contests. (The one we most regretted losing was Cornel West, whom we twice persuaded to join our ranks, only to have him twice depart for other schools, neither of which has been able to hold him.)

Our Educational Research Program should be counted a singular achievement of this era, even though we were able to support it financially for only five

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years. In that time, under Mac Warford's able direction, we learned more about our students, our faculty, and our combined strengths and weaknesses than had ever been systematically learned before at Union. As I have indicated, the analyses coming out of this research in 1981 enormously aided the work of our planning committee of that year. Among other things it provided empirical evidence for what "worked" and did not work in our attempts to prepare students for ministry in churches and in education. Central to this study was a longitudinal following of a sample of students from their matriculation through their first years after graduation. We discovered, for example, that the students who did best in our place were those who (a) loved the city, (b) had a strong sense of vocation before they entered seminary, and (c) had an affiliation outside the seminary—typically a church congregation—that protected them from identifying their "home" too exclusively with the seminary itself. I am sure that one of the achievements of this era, already alluded to, was the administrative coherency of a senior staff. Its collaborative style was sometimes so effective that faculty and students overestimated its power! I tried repeatedly to make sure that we tolerated no wedges being driven between staff members, e.g., between the president and the dean. Sometimes that required some personal compromise on one side or another, but the resulting teamwork was worth the compromise. At stake here, often enough, was the inclination of faculty and students to think that this year's unpleasant decisions could be undone and reversed next year. Making decisions in educational institutions is hard enough; making them stick is often just as hard.

Since the severance of its connection with the Presbyterian Church in 1892, Union has exerted pioneering leadership in the ecumenical movement, especially in the mid-20th century through its Program of Advanced Study, which brought several hundred young church leaders together from all over the world. Discontinuations of foundation funds led to the abandonment of that program in the '60s, and in the years following our reputation for ecumenism exceeded our resources. The time had come, we decided, to stress the cultivation of ecumenical consciousness in the internal culture of the school. With a new modest grant from the Luce Foundation, and with the leadership of Kosuke Koyama, we established an ecumenical program that had considerable impact on the informal side of our curriculum. Moreover, our work in this program turned out to be a precursor of the work that Koyama and I did as members of the ATS Committee on the Globalization of Theological Education, which in the 1980s became a major programmatic emphasis of the Association and a new element in its accreditation standards. Union's own chance to participate in the "local-global immersion" program, funded by the Pew Trusts, eventually

resulted from these efforts, and I think it is fair to say that Union was an important catalyst for convincing other seminary leaders that the global context of local theological education is an idea whose time had come.

Making connections between academic disciplines and societal sectors had long been a forte of mine, and I was happy to pursue this interest institutionally and personally. We set in place and recruited students for a joint degree program between Union and the Columbia School of Social Work and another with the Manhattan School of Music. (The former still flourishes, while the latter has lapsed, chiefly due to lack of organ student enrollment at Manhattan.) More ambitiously, two chancellors of the Jewish Theological Seminary and two presidents of Union have now worked on the design of an endowed program of Jewish-Christian studies for both master's and doctoral students—a project whose failure to attract that endowment yet is one of the real disappointments of my time at Union. But the very existence of the proposal betokens some new links between UTS and JTS that I view as one of the achievements of my time as president, one that began in a series of semi-annual meetings of the two faculties in the '70s in my home, where we had to learn some of the rituals of kosher cuisine.

On a more personal level, I struck up, over these years, new interdisciplinary, interprofessional teaching connections with professors at JTS, the Columbia School of Business, and (more recently) the Columbia School of Journalism. Had this president's attention not been so often glued to questions of finance and conflict inside the walls of Union itself, I would have gladly pursued more intensely these intermural educational relationships.

I should beware of underestimating the financial achievements of this era. The school has plenty of financial problems left over from my administration, but it is certain that the new president has had delivered to him a board, a set of analyses, and a financial consciousness in the school far superior to the one that I inherited in 1975. Given the continuing financial struggle, it will be easy to forget that between 1975 and 1991 Union raised more money than it did in any other comparable era in its history. (The exception may be the 1908-12 era, when the land and majority of our buildings were purchased by a board of prestigious New Yorkers.) We raised approximately 20 million in capital gifts and 10 million in annual gifts, funding four faculty chairs in the process, including one (our new Bonhoeffer chair) supported by a million dollars raised in Germany, our largest gift ever from a foreign source. In addition, we know of some 15 million dollars designated for Union in the wills of various friends, mostly board members past or present. We now know that deferred giving is the chief promise of the future health and survival of private institutions in the United States, and, like its early

awareness of its budget problems, Union may have been somewhat in advance of many institutions of higher education in grasping the importance of deferred giving. When in the late '80s, I read about the fiscal anxieties of Yale, Stanford, and Columbia, descriptions of their exigencies sounded eerily like the smaller-scale problems of Union in the '70s. It is small but sober comfort to know that you exercised some leadership here—not because you wanted to, but because you had to.

The Problems This President Had to Work On

To supplement the above narrative, a more analytic account of what seminary presidents are, become, and do is in order. I am an admirer of Sir Geoffrey Vickers's writings about the choices he and others had to make as members of the British civil service, especially of all that he means by the concept of "the multi-valued choice." Ethicists have some natural affinities for the reality that most of the difficult choices in human affairs lie not between competing good and evil but between competing goods. One does not have to be an ethicist, once one has become president of any organization of humans, to begin dealing with this pervasive fact about leadership.

Below I identify the major problems that camped about my office during my 16 years as tensions between two or more goods or values. In this list, perhaps, more than in any institutional memoir, others may find themselves able to identify the commonalities that bind all presidents into one great fellowship of shared perplexity.

Personal History and Appropriation of Organizational History

In one of the wry comments for which he was famous, some years before his departure in 1975 from Union to become president of Louisville Theological Seminary, C. Ellis Nelson remarked to some colleagues, "At Union nothing has a reason, and everything has a history." He was putting his finger on the undoubted conservatism of Union and many another organization that publicly prides itself on being the home of liberals, radicals, and cutting-edge innovators. One explanation of the tempers that sometimes flare in our place is that Union people and institutional patterns resist change as much as do other organizations accustomed to more conservative rhetoric.

Aware that I was an outsider to this institutional history, I framed my inaugural address around quotations from all the available inaugural addresses

of my 12 predecessors. The continuity in their notion of the Union Seminary mission was striking, and I quickly perceived that the school had long defined itself around certain polarities: the church and the academy, evangelical piety and high scholarship, an urban locale and an international outreach, social reconciliation and social justice. I came to realize that Union's persistently cantankerous history had much to do with the wide scope of its scholarly-practical aspirations, not unique in the world of theological schools but perhaps uniquely intense. Openness to the new was nothing new at Union; in this respect it was liberal. Treating history—ancient events and documents—as essential for present religious identity was in itself traditional, and Henry Sloane Coffin was not far from the truth about the place when he tagged this tradition as “liberal evangelical.” With the two sides of that term I could identify, and over the years I found it very important to remind various audiences that there is such a thing as a prophetic tradition: prophecy that upsets tradition and tradition that tests the validity of prophecy.

The rapidity with which I was able to appropriate Union's history agreeably surprised me, and it surprised some others too—e.g., John Bennett, who over the years has been a great strength to me personally and an ideal candidate for the award, “Model Former President.” (From time to time he would write me encouraging letters in which he would draw from his knowledge of Union back in the '30s. Not once did he try to tell me how to be the president, but not once did he fail to be encouraging.)

Whether or not they are graduates of the school, presidents must buy into its history. Not to study and appropriate its past is to wander blindfolded into its future.

Overcoming a Prestigious History with New Definitions of Prestige

Union's self-identification with its history had its problems, however. From time to time in speeches I would try to remind audiences that a prophetic institution finds ways to repent of its historical sins—e.g., its sin in 1917-18 of firing a member of the faculty for his German sympathies and its slowness to acknowledge women as ministers in the 1950s. These were healthy references for the post-1975 generation of faculty, because by then people around the country were asking questions like, “Will the new president restore Union to its glory days under Tillich and Niebuhr?” I had to reply to these questions by asserting the new kinds of “glory” that Union was fashioning in the persons of faculty like James Cone, Beverly Harrison, James Forbes, Cornel West, Phyllis

Trible, and Kosuke Koyama. I speculated that, if Reinhold Niebuhr were to return to Union today, he might find fewer students willing to study “under” him and a lot more who were willing to argue with him. Celebrating past and present with no derogation of either is a delicate presidential task. It was especially so at Union in the '70s among faculty who had to fight off the suggestion that they were no longer intellectuals on a par with those of their predecessors. Inspiration by an institutional past is one thing; intimidation by it is another.

Overcoming the Split between Educational Aspiration and Financial Constraint

Perhaps the greatest operational shift in my vocational sense, however, came in my transition from 10 years of educational innovation on two university campuses to the task of jettisoning certain of Union’s innovations-in-place for the sake of keeping the fiscal ship from capsizing. Some of Union’s educational breakthroughs—the Religion and Drama, Psychiatry and Religion, and Advanced Religious Studies programs, for example—had recently had their foundation supports pulled away from them. It was a cruel lesson in the dangers of foundations to the stability of educational institutions. Temperamentally it went quite against my personal grain and that of numerous colleagues; not only could we not now afford the new and untested educational idea, we could not afford some of the old, tested ideas either. Throwing away cargo is hard on any ship’s captain. In the process the thought must naturally occur: How much can we throw away and still be making the voyage worthwhile?

One of the reasons for my demand for a sizable fund for educational research, at the very beginning, had its source here. We managed over the five years to use that \$600,000, at the discretion of the president, for experiment as well as for research. How to keep open to change while having to close the gate on many a previous budget line is a harrowing task. Budget crises bring out the protective conservatism in an institution; everyone hastens to fortify his or her own special interest. Sometimes a president, a board, and a cluster of faculty must be determined to do new things with no additional resources or do new things with such modest additional resources that peer jealousies do not tear up the team.

The Ambiguities of Presidential Power

It is a truism that the power of a leader varies with the power attributed to him or her by constituents. The latter may be ready for the leader to make this or that decision, and in that readiness is a grant of power. At ecumenical Union,

however, such grants were rare, in part, I came to believe, because of the diverse theories of church governance in which all of us had been raised. Some expected me to be the Episcopal head of Union; others, the Presbyterian moderator of elected representative leaders; and yet others, the Baptist pastor always subject to democratic review and recall. This analysis was complicated by other models of authority endemic to academe: the authority of the faculty, in particular. After all, faculty are the heart of an educational institution, and that is one reason why it is important for the president to be a member of the faculty. Then he or she is first among equals, not the unequal convener of superiors. Like medical doctors, faculty see their daily work as the object of administrative services, and they are not shy about denigrating administration as something less than “real work”—a phrase which a candid colleague used wryly with me on one occasion. In academic culture it is popular to despise mere administration, and a faculty member’s “promotion” to dean or president will be widely viewed as a fall from grace. Outsiders may call the president a “CEO,” but the meaning of that designation is radically different from the same in a business corporation.

Different, too, are the responsibilities of a board of directors in an educational institution. In Union’s situation as a freestanding seminary, in contrast to most university-related and denomination-related schools, the board “owns” the seminary and is responsible to a state government with its prerogative to incorporate the school and to accredit its various degree programs. Over the years nothing is more important among a president’s powers than the ability to influence the membership of the board. But a board is no mirror image of presidential preferences. Its chief, unequivocal appointment right, of course, is the president, who is not likely to forget the board’s hiring and firing power. Equally important to note here is the role of the chair of the board. She or he is a true colleague to the president, and I can testify that without the frequent counsel and collaboration of two superb board chairmen, I could not have done this job.

All this adds up to considerable ambiguity of presidential power. Its exercise consists of constant negotiation, especially between the board and the faculty, neither of which tend to understand the culture of the other. Each has its own large sense of prerogative, and each on occasion may be puzzled or angered by what the other does not understand about its respective responsibility for the welfare of the school. The president here is very much the person in the middle, seldom having the experience of being fully “in charge” of the school or clearly the representative of either the board alone or the faculty alone.

As he was about to retire from our faculty, Raymond Brown and I had a breakfast together, and one of his parting remarks to me was, “I think that Union

runs best when its president is a Presbyterian, and it helps if the president is also a Christian.” It was a personally affirmative remark. About the Presbyterian side, his hunch was probably right, for Presbyterians are accustomed to infinite committee consultations, and they are (or ought to be) uncomfortable with unilateral decision-making. But analogies from church government work only partially in a Union Seminary, and the ambiguity of presidential power will not go away.

Adjusting the Pace of Change: Too Fast, Too Slow

For an institution whose daily life is fraught with “schedule,” attention to the stewardship of time seems remarkably low in many a school. By this I mean that “getting through this semester” occupies faculty and student alike, and thinking about next year’s challenges seems quite postponable. Presidents probably have to get used to the likelihood that the longer they are in the job, the more they will get concerned with five and 10 years out, and the less understanding they will garner from constituents for that preoccupation.

Another form of this phenomenon is the low awareness of many seminary non-academic staff of how the value of some work declines over time. Foundation proposal deadlines are powerful discipline here, as is the oncoming of a decennial reaccreditation visit. But the ordinary habit of humans in bureaucracies seems to be addiction to a certain timelessness: there is always next week, or next year. Presidents have to live in a different sense of inexorable temporality, e.g., with awareness of how today’s cost of keeping the seminary open affects next year’s budget and—more important—how the pace of change in the society external to the seminary will not wait for the seminary to catch up. Suspension in time is dangerous to organizations; one day their leaders will wake up to find that the times have passed them by.

Giving Voice to the Most Voiceless: The Next Generation

Closely related to the above is the responsibility of the board and the president for thinking ahead, not five years, but 15 and 20. Liberation theology speaks much of giving voice to the voiceless, but environmentalists have taught us to think generationally about the future. As I have already suggested, nothing seems to divide presidents and boards from faculty and students so much as this division of responsibility. Boards, in fact, need on occasion to protect presidents from their natural preoccupation with today’s crisis, pushing them to see that crisis in relation to a long-range future and to get prepared, if necessary, for some decisions that bring pain to the present generation for the sake of a future one.

There is no doubt among most observers of Union in the '70s and '80s that, had we simply yielded to our natural collective resistance to hard and painful budget decisions, the school would have gone out of existence, to the loss, a president has to believe, of some potential theological students who at this moment are only 10 years old.

Tending the Store vs. Citizenship in the Community

This issue is personal to me as a social ethicist. In being interviewed by our presidential search committee in 1991, I said that probably the greatest personal sacrifice I made in accepting Union's presidency was the freedom I had enjoyed in Raleigh and in Atlanta to involve myself in the causes, the politics, and the secular organizations of the community. In fact, I said, one of the few times I felt really active in a political issue in New York City was my involvement in a case of police brutality exercised against one of our students. That case escalated into a large public fracas. I was a witness at a congressional hearing on police brutality as a result, and this was the only occasion when, to my knowledge, my face and words appeared on the national evening TV news. It also became the one occasion concerning which I offered testimony to a committee of the state legislature.

"Publicity" in the usual sense is not what I missed in being Union's president, but I missed it in an unusual sense: by my lights, too much time had to be spent tending to the daily business of my institution, too little tending to some business of the public. That constriction comes with the territory, I fear, and it is one of the surprises of my tenure as president, for I had hoped that the head of the place would have frequent opportunity to be heard on issues of social justice in the city. The chance to be active in local church, Presbytery, General Assembly, and National and World Council of Churches committees and boards balanced out my social conscience here. But, aside from a few Op Ed articles, letters to the editor, and numerous petitions on social issues, I was never quite satisfied in these matters. To be sure, the day is past when heads of seminaries (or even universities) are expected to be important public advocates of this or that social policy, but the more powerful deterrence here is simply the sustaining of the institution that is your prime responsibility. Even when you are out making speeches to national gatherings, people back at the school say they "wish the president were here more often." In fact, the details of administration pile up every day on your desk, and people in the place feel a little more secure when you are around and accessible.

Stretching the Pluralism While Guarding the Coherence of the Institution

When he completed his year with us as a visiting professor in 1977, Eberhard Bethge commented to me, "I have never been in a school that *talked* so much about 'community' and which had so little of it." It was an objective assessment. In the old days of Union, say in the '30s, almost every student was male, white, and in residence. "Community" in such a group came readily. Now, in the '90s, with half of our student body being commuters, half being women, and 25 percent being members of some ethnic minority, we are a pluralistic place, subject more than ever to misunderstandings, eruptions of hostility, and caucuses galore. No wonder that people complain wistfully of a lack of community, illustrated by the remark of a Black woman student some years ago: "Sometimes in class I want to offer some disagreement with what another student has said, but then I think that I'll be slammed against the wall for speaking out, so I keep quiet." She was speaking figuratively (I hope), but it is nonetheless a disturbing image.

Underappreciated at Union, and elsewhere I suspect, is the role of institutional structure in making possible the very expression of such hostility. That structure may involve processes that can turn hostility toward understanding and an unprecedented experience of community-among-the-different. A poignant, delicate example is Union's well-known openness to gay and lesbian students. In the mid '70s that openness entailed a lot of pain among those students, sensitive as they were to whether or not others around really accepted them into the community. Union endured a lot of anger in this period, probably displaced from the society. Stewards of the institution lived in the double-bind of homosexuals who suspected that the institution disdained them and forces in the public (and sometimes in the seminary board) that really did disdain them. The latter was unavoidably a problem for the president, who had to stand on the border between an oppressed minority and outsiders who thought that they should be oppressed. Protecting the former and mollifying the latter was no easy task. My own resolution of the problem was simply to keep insisting—first of all in my interior self—that kindness towards people different from oneself is the first law of the gospel ethic, and that whatever may be the "right" view of the mystery of homosexuality, while we are figuring out the mystery we are required to "love the brothers and the sisters." This particular statement I do not remember ever making in an official capacity, but I tried frequently to enact it. This was one of the junctures in which I could honestly say that my most important preparation for becoming president of a seminary was my experience as pastor of a congregation. Money-raising may be at the top of the agenda of

presidential responsibility these days; human relations share that position, sometimes invisibly.

Worth mentioning in this connection is what persons and institutionalized procedures sometimes achieve in heading off great, destructive fractures in community life. In my time I have had to deal with the criminal behavior of a non-academic staff member, charges against staff of sexual abuse of women students, destructive acting-out behavior of mentally ill students, slander against faculty occasioned by plausible accusations of spouse-abuse, and intra-faculty hostilities left over from the early '70s that haunted us into the '80s. Often these events led to the institutionalizing of ways to deal with future outbreaks of the same—e.g., a grievance committee. More often there was no regularized way to deal with the crisis—one just had to wade in, feel the waves of the fracas, endure the winds of blame that came one's way, and work out compromises that embodied rough, imperfect justice. On many such occasions I reflected ruefully that Union Seminary as a human institution acted in ways that conformed to Reinhold Niebuhr's analyses: power conflicts, "moral" people, "immoral" collectives, less than perfect solutions to conflicts of less than perfect humans. A faculty member, one who probably caused me more trouble than any other, once commented to me that after all "you are a Niebuhrian." I did not have the courage to tell him that among others, his actions caused administrators to act in "Niebuhrian" fashion. If we had not, we would have failed to build around our fractious ways of life at Union one thing that can keep them from becoming ways of death: the determination of some leaders to *be* the personal "structures" that contain and even facilitate conflict. Robert Handy and Roger Shinn were models of this difficult task. Though I never met him outside his writings, Daniel Day Williams may have been the greatest model of all. A certain remnant of staff and students belong on this list. They were a leaven that often saved the lump.

I was often reminded at Union of the great capitalized sentence in the final declaration of the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948: "WE INTEND TO STAY TOGETHER." Somebody in an institution had better intend that, the president most of all.

Being Ethicist and Administrator without Being a Hypocrite

Related to this presidential function, surely, are certain disciplines of speech. Early on in my tenure I had to learn to curb my ordinary academic habit of speaking my mind on this, that, and everything. Such speech can be dangerous to a president, who does not often have the luxury of thinking out loud outside of some close, trusted administrative associates. Down this way, of course, lies apparent hypocrisy or equally apparent cowardice. The circum-

stance is especially severe for an ethicist accustomed to reasoned, theologically-based, publicly expressible opinions.

Doubtless leadership consists on occasion of asserting a preference or principle that hardly anyone else is ready to accept, but it is less important for presidents to express preferences or to be right “in principle” than to pay attention to others’ preferences and to be successful in practice. Practice in institutions means collaborative decisions and collaborative responsibility for carrying out decisions. Too many cooks *may* spoil the broth, but too few cooks are likely to produce a broth that too few others find tasty. Here the wisdom of my friend James Laney comes to mind again, and also the import of what it means to put the institutional interest ahead of your own interest.

This wisdom is not widely appreciated, especially among students who have never had to be pastor of a church or head of an organization built on a lot of voluntary cooperation. The mellow, smooth-edged rhetoric of politicians has its source in this setting; one of their jobs is to enable constituents to stick together while complex policies for dealing with conflicting interests are being worked out. Constituents should be invited, whenever possible, to participate in the protection of their interests as the policies are developed; and, even if the ultimate policies lead to their alienation, it is important for them not to have reason to think, ahead of time, that the cards are already stacked against them in the “all powerful” opinions of the president. Of course the president is not all that powerful, but constituents can imagine it so as they go about turning a casual remark into a fixed intention.

Dealing with One’s Own Fallibility and Finitude

In one of his books Peter Berger comments that all of us come to a point in our lives when the confidence we had in the authority and wisdom of our mentors gets shattered. Were they as uncertain and confused on occasion as we almost always are? Yes, and they were as fallible as we are. The second section of Bonhoeffer’s poem “Who Am I?” confesses just this discrepancy between the inner view of one’s own adulthood and the outer view of the allegedly self-confident leader.

My own version of this transition, not laced with modesty but with realistic finitude, was a reflection to myself in the process of responding to the invitation of the search committee in 1975 to accept this presidency: “Do they mean to imply that the other 12 presidents of this place had about the same promise and competence as they see in me? And does that mean that the institutions of this world are run by people more or less of my caliber?” I cannot stress too much, in this candid paper, that this reflection was not a cover for mere pride or mere

self-disparagement. It was rather a cover for realistic fear; here again, the precedents of the youthful responses of a Moses and a Jeremiah to their calls are important to me.

More important, however, is a Calvinist-Presbyterian slant on calls that depends less on self-confidence than upon the “confirming” confidence of others *and* on the Mordicai-view that says: particular folk are called in particular times to particular places. That particularity frees the called to do what they can do without imagining that they have to duplicate the work of predecessors. This was Donald Shriver’s version of the faculty’s struggle against the malaise of living in the shadow of the Niebuhr-Tillich era. Though students from that era may still like to call it “the glory days,” the Apostle Paul offers the good reminder that there are different kinds of glory, and it is pretentious, actually idolatrous, to fix on any time and place as the epitome and climax of every past and future. (H. Richard Niebuhr called it “chronological snobbery,” and he liked to call attention to the German historian Ranke’s view that “every time exists directly for God.”) To put it in a Jeremianic-Isaianic-Pauline-conflated metaphor: God has lots of pots and earthen vessels for carrying around treasure, and neither overweening pride nor self-derogating modesty should obscure the faith in the response, “Okay, here am I, send me.”

It goes without saying that colleagues of a president are indispensable for cultivating and maintaining in him or her the self-confidence that ought to emerge from experience on the job. They are indispensable from start to finish, for my experience was that the “lonely pinnacle of leadership” is a dangerous, false myth when it comes to leaders of institutions. Leaders acquire courage for their work from encouragement, and if they begin thinking that they do not need encouragers they are candidates for psychological collapse.

They need that encouragement to bear with their own fallibility as well as with their finitude. Tempting to logic here is the corollary to the above: “When others help shape your decisions, they will have to share responsibility for the mistakes.” I tried to avoid this temptation, for “the buck stops here” is still the watchword of responsible presidents. On the contrary, presidents must be willing to play the role of scapegoat on occasion for the mistakes of their colleagues, unless the rare occasion comes when the mistake justifies a firing.

Among the various mistakes that I could acknowledge from my 16 years as president of Union, the most painful were mistakes in appointments, especially of staff members who were mine to appoint. Good judgment about the capacities of other people is essential in administration, but there are no infallible appointment decisions. The pain of a mistake here is twofold: eventually you have to go into an office and fire the occupant, and then you have to endure the mixed

judgments of others as to why you made that appointment in the first place and whether the firing was just in the last place. It is impossible to carry all this out without experiencing a residue of guilt: for the first mistake and for the hurt you are imposing. Every trustworthy executive whom I have known dreads firing somebody. If, as an exerciser of power, they enjoy the transaction, they do not deserve to hold that power.

I should add that dealing with finitude can sometimes be as difficult as dealing with sin: the finite abilities of others, one's own finitude in "solving" the troubles of others, and—perhaps the most frustrating administrative finitude of all—in the raising of money. As already indicated, in my 16 years our administration and board raised a record amount of money for Union, but for every million we raised, there were millions we tried and failed to raise, all of which we really needed to realize our institutional ambitions. The acceptance of limits to one's powers is a crucial test of one's adulthood and one's right to be called a professional, but there is not much practical comfort in quoting Robert Browning on the point: "A man's reach must exceed his grasp, else what's a heaven for?" I suppose a reader of the New Testament could translate that thought, ". . . or what's an eschaton for?" In the more mundane present institutional context, perhaps the soberest translation is: "One administration's reach must exceed its grasp, or what's the next administration for?"

Deciding When to Resign

Here perhaps the experience of one president is least transferable to another. Long presidencies have their benefits: in pursuit of elusive but achievable goals, in careful cultivation of leadership, in the building of real rather than temporary financial strength, and in symbolizing to a public a certain stability in the institution. The latter was particularly important to Union's reputation, since it had in 1974 fired a president and continued into the '70s to get into the newspapers chiefly for some internal controversy. For the sake of the public image of the school, I always knew that such controversy was *not* the time for a Union president to resign.

One could follow John Fletcher's lead and say that anytime after 10 years is surely a fair time to resign. The difficulty with such a rule is that it may have no relation to the rhythms and cycles of need and opportunity in the internal life of an institution. My last six years at Union were much taken up with effecting a crucial shift in our financial battle with our structural deficit. Somehow the hand of duty drew me "once more into the breach" of institutional security that by now I probably understood as well as anybody around.

There are dangers and downsides to that lure of duty, however, and they deserve attention. In spite of vision and ambition, no president solves all the problems. Every solution that one has superintended has its cost: in the support of people who did not like the solution, for example. (In my case the most critical example was those forced moves of eight faculty out of their apartments into other quarters.) Every year of most leaders' tenure loses some friends—a phenomenon ordinary in the career of almost every elected politician. Their popularity inevitably erodes. Vital in all of this may be the critical maturity to admit to oneself, "There are gifts needed in this new time of our history that I do not possess." But equally vital are the "juices" that one can bring to the job once one has done it for long years. Gradually in the late '80s I could feel myself getting tired of the two great challenges: dealing with the same old human conflicts and facing the same old financial needs. That both were "old" was a signal from my psyche that it was time to retire as president.

On the more positive side, I had long ago indicated to our board executive committee that I was homesick for a return to the interdisciplinary academic work that had long been my enthusiasm. To pursue that out of the affiliations I already enjoyed in neighboring academic institutions was an opportunity that the board readily honored, and so I resigned as president to take up four years of full-time teaching as the rounding-out final stage of my tenure at Union. The budget costs of holding on to that tenure struck my administrative conscience immediately, and I had to be willing to allow the thought, "Well, it's not all that unreasonable a reward." Happily, a number of academic presidents around the country are returning to their faculties as teachers. Though it had never before happened at Union, I have been pleased to initiate the precedent.

The Theology I Tried to Practice

It behooves the president of a theological school to think theologically about the job. This is risky, first because many aspects of the job are quite comparable to those of administrators in many a secular organization. There, in fact, the theology may be as pertinent as it is to an institution that has the word "theos" in its title. A belief in the priesthood of all believers and the divine presence in all of life should yield such pertinence. Moreover, many times I have thought *politically* about the work of pastors and executives and presidents in religious institutions, and there is good Calvinist precedent for thinking that way; for, as Sheldon Wolin put it, Calvinists developed both a religious theory of the state and a political theory of the church.

Perhaps my chief worry about heavy theologizing about the job is that it will partake of that which often characterizes the protests of faculty, students, and staff in a seminary as they turn questions of their legitimate self-interests into causes of illegitimate righteousness with divine blessing. Proof texts are always at hand in a theological seminary, and purist theological arguments against sober compromises of policy can always arise in those who have no responsibility for searching for compromise. But even in this rumination there hides a theological surmise, and I should begin with it.

Education Will Not Save the World, Not Even Theological Education, which Should Teach that God Saves It

The First Commandment forbids idolatry, and a seminary of high international prestige is a good place to forbid it. Part of the pain of budget cutbacks at Union in my era was the sense, shared by many graduates, that Union was too great an institution to suffer from such constrictions, that it should be able to do all the good things it had been doing over the years. When, in the mid-'80s, we actually voiced in our board the possibility that a freestanding liberal institution in New York City was no longer viable, this Calvinist had to consent anew to the faith that God could rule the world without the assistance of Union Seminary. That is a thought worth applying to all things human, of course, but it needs to be followed by the second, happier thought that people and institutions who have forsworn idolatry are in a position to offer themselves as servants of a Will and Wisdom beyond their own. In that spirit, a lot of us at Union still believe that there are uses for a Union Seminary in the economy of God. That faith, after all, gave to all the struggles and disciplines of the past two decades their purpose and hope.

New Occasions Teach New Definitions of Excellence and Prestige; the Old Are Not to Endure

In 1994 there was some newly intensive discussion in our faculty about possible curriculum reforms that could bring us all closer to the churches, the city, and the global human community. I like to think that the era 1975-91 has finally borne fruit in a new freedom of the faculty to turn its attention to the substance of our work as theological teachers rather than to worries about its supportive superstructures. In any event, it is evident to many of us that the old traditions at Union and other American seminaries are due for some respectful putting aside; we must get away from our individualistic career styles and our preoccupation with disciplines. We must deal systematically with the life of congregations, and in our prophetic criticism of the church we must not fail to

be pastoral and respectful towards that church. We have got to find a way to introduce the study of world religions into our curriculum, but we must not lose the “evangelical” side of Uncle Henry’s “liberal evangelical” vocation of Union, which means more attention and hospitality to the vigor of evangelical church people in the United States and elsewhere. These and many other concerns, appropriate to a global, rich-and-poor, interconnected and fragmented world human community, are signs of the times that God must mean for us to read, and in reading them we will enjoy a new freedom to honor our institutional predecessors without feeling bound to imitate them.

Leaders Are Servants, Not Heroes

Leaders grow when they listen, are vulnerable, and are not embarrassed to change their minds. I like what Max DePree has said about leaders: “The first duty of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say, ‘thank you.’ In between the leader is a servant.” In light of reality’s flux of change and one’s obligation to shape some of it to one’s own purposes, the first item in this formula is not easy, for as T.S. Eliot said, “Humankind cannot bear very much reality.” Nonetheless, the high purpose of getting others to face reality is that together we might change some of it. Much easier is the “thank you,” and I tried to do a lot of that in my tenure, especially in the writing of letters and notes.

The servant-item is the most ambiguous. A trusted staff member at Union once said to me, “You know, you brought two great gifts to us as president: one was that you absorbed so many of our hostilities.” (The other, he said, was an astonishing marriage—which is another matter; but it is significant that he thought it significant. I thought so too.) I will let his testimony stand, but I will add my own testimony that, especially in a community that celebrates righteous anger, it is very important for the stability of the place to have in it people who rein in their own capacity for anger. Angry people may not always realize how difficult they are to listen to, but listen to them the leader must, mustering as much vulnerability as possible to the important human messages carried in the anger. I am not much convinced that decibel-level determines the effectiveness of protests, but I know that leaders had better privatize much of their own anger in response to protest. If they publicize it, they risk aligning themselves with a faction and thereby increasing the problems of putting a community back together again.

More ordinary is the requirement of vulnerability to advice and learning to change one’s opinions and inclinations to act. The line between wise flexibility and supine pliability may be hard to draw here, but it frequently has to be drawn. Not all issues are subject to compromise, not all majorities deserve presidential

support, nor do all mind-changes deserve the name of *metanoia*. On the other hand, mind-changing is painful business, and leaders had better develop a capacity for that pain.

Perhaps the true underlying theological-ethical issue here is what it means to acquire the “broken and contrite heart” of Psalm 51 while having to take stands, announce decisions, and shoulder aggressive initiatives. Seminaries can be full of folk who, in Learned Hand’s phrase, only irregularly exhibit “the spirit of liberty that is not too sure it is right.” Above all, presidents have theological reason to pray for the gift of that spirit. And I remember, early in my years at Union, praying that I could avoid arrogance in response to the arrogance that I encountered more than a little in this place. If one has a smidgin of Christian piety at work in one’s life, of course, the great control of arrogance ought to be an awareness of sin. I admit to some difficulty here, for not all the sins this president was accused of is he willing to confess as real sins! But there are plenty of real ones to confess, and for dealing with those the repair of Psalm 51 to the forgiveness of God is repair indeed. Over the years at Union I had many occasions to reflect, however, that we need the practice of forgiveness horizontally as much as we need it vertically. Many times I had confirmed in my own experience the thesis of Hannah Arendt that, in his “discovery” of the vertical-horizontal complementarity of forgiveness, Jesus was telling us how a society, undoubtedly composed of sinners, can nonetheless stick together. I found forgiveness at Union Seminary a much more practical, down-to-earth social virtue than Reinhold Niebuhr seems to have found it, and this finding has borne recent fruit in my new post-presidential sabbatical-leave-facilitated book, *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics*, soon to be published by Oxford University Press.

Like the Christian Life, Leadership Is a Journey and a Pilgrimage; It Is Not Exactly “Management by Objectives”

In their book, *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President*, Michael D. Cohen and James G. March challenge the popular modern rationalist paradigm of leadership in organizations with the observation that perhaps we ought to treat “good management” as a way of seeking and finding “more interesting goals” than the ones now posited. Rational thinking about acting assumes that one identifies goals and then pursues them. But what if our goals are incomplete at best and wrong at worst?

Perhaps we should explore a somewhat different approach to the normative question of how we ought to behave when our

value premises are not yet (and never will be) fully determined. Suppose we treat action as a way of creating interesting goals at the same time as we treat goals as a way of justifying action

Interesting people and interesting organizations construct complicated theories of themselves. To do this, they need to supplement the technology of reason with a technology of foolishness. Individuals and organizations sometimes need ways of doing things for which they have no good reason. They need to act before they think.

Cohen and March go on to comment that “in an organization that wants to continue to develop new objectives, a manager needs to be tolerant of the idea that he will discover the meaning of yesterday’s action in the experiences and interpretations of today.” The corollaries are several: goals can be mere hypotheses; intuition may serve us better on occasion than goals; the ability to “forget and overlook” may be as important as memory; and past experience is always open to new understanding. “Experience can be changed retrospectively. By changing our interpretative concepts now, we modify what we learned earlier. Thus we expose the possibility of experimenting with alternative histories.”

One might tag this philosophy a careful pragmatism. It matches much of my experience of 16 years as a seminary president, and moreover it has great compatibility with both the fifth and the 11th chapters of Hebrews:

“He [Jesus] learned obedience through what he suffered...”
(5:8)
“He [Abraham] went out, not knowing where he was to go...”(11:8)

In the going, both believed that trustworthy guidance would occur along the way.

I can think of many illustrations of how this pilgrimage-image fit certain positive experiences at Union, but two stand out.

The one is our institutional development of, and contribution to, a program now known as “Globalization in Theological Education.” Soon after arriving at Union, I observed with surprise the baleful impact of budget constrictions on the ecumenical breadth of the school’s active commitments. Money for scholarships for international students was in scarce supply, and internally there was a certain shrinkage of confidence in Union’s ability to continue the great ecumenical tradition of the Van Dusen era. As a first remedy to this, we designated the

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new professor of ecumenics (first Robert McAfee Brown and then Kosuke Koyama) as director of an ecumenical program for which we were able to get Luce Foundation funding. The purpose of the program was to open all possible windows inside Union to the world church, to its representatives in our student body, and to its leaders who came to New York on one or another mission. Without our calling it so, we were experimenting with “localization of the global” in the culture of Union, which was to be one model of “globalization of theological education” that the ATS would begin to study in 1980 through a committee of which I was chair and Koyama was a member. I can testify that in this committee I was going out not knowing where I was to go and, in fact, I was a bit skeptical that such a theme and committee could make much of a splash in the Association as a whole.

To my agreeable surprise, not only did the study garner large interest in a fair number of the member schools, but when our committee made its final report in 1986, the Association decided (at the happy initiative of the late Orlando Costas) to establish criteria for “globalization” in ATS accreditation standards, thus underscoring for all the schools the seriousness of our common membership in the global village. ATS also decided to continue the committee, and its new leadership successfully acquired foundation grants for some formal programming on themes that our earlier committee had helped generate. One large spinoff of this effort was a million-dollar grant that set in motion a five-year program of “local-global immersion” that has involved 12 schools and regional teams of faculty, students, and board members in three-week visits to three different areas of the world. Union became one participant among the 12, and the impacts of this program to date are both tangible and open-ended. Bread cast upon the waters in 1980 came back to us in abundance. Locally we do not know what the future of this exploration will be, but we do know that it has led us to some new engagements with our New York City context, and it has brought a new level of collaboration around local-global ministry to about a third of our faculty. That third some of us deem a critical mass for breaking with some narrow traditional pedagogy at Union, through more cross-cultural and contextual learning in our future curriculum. In all, I am rather amazed at where this ecumenical path has led: we are much farther down that path than I would ever have imagined in the '70s. I am sure that this story is not an example of management by objectives.

A more dramatic and even more gratifying illustration of where the pilgrim spirit can lead is the 15-year course of events that resulted in the establishment of Union’s new (and fully endowed) Dietrich Bonhoeffer Chair in Theology and Ethics. In the early '60s Bonhoeffer’s *Letters and Papers from Prison* helped inspire

a number of my efforts at North Carolina State University to find God and the church “in the center of the village.” From at least that far back I know that he was the most important of all modern theologians to me, chiefly because his life and death embodied his theology in its address to the great political crises of my own youth in the '30s and '40s. As I came to Union, a local Presbyterian Church had acquired a fund for visiting professors. The first of these turned out to be Eberhard Bethge, who taught with us during the 1976-77 school year. My own admiration for Bethge and a growing friendship with him impelled me in the summer of 1977 to spend part of my vacation reading his long biography of Bonhoeffer, which was for me a humbling and uplifting experience.

Next, sometime in 1983, with a little research I discovered the number of Bonhoeffer's dormitory room during his 1930-31 study at Union and then determined the location of the “prophet's chamber” in which he stayed during his decisive three-week visit here in July 1939. That room, for years a rather disheveled study for tutors, a member of our board (UTS '65) agreed to refurbish with a gift of \$25,000, which turned the space into one of the choice official meeting rooms of the Seminary. Faculty, board, and many classes now meet there. We promptly named it the Bonhoeffer Room, and for its dedication we awarded Eberhard Bethge our fourth Union Medal in a ceremony in the room.

That was, all told, a very significant ceremony, bringing together history, theology, and a prophetic modern Christian witness. For this social ethicist, that constituted a solid bit of celebratable integrity. But the end was not yet. In June of 1989 we awarded the Union Medal to Richard F. von Weizsaecker, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, chiefly in tribute to the remarkable speech which he delivered to his Bundestag on May 8, 1985, cataloguing in unprecedented public detail the collective crimes of the Nazi era. The first part of the award ceremony took place in the Bonhoeffer Room, and the later speeches and panel discussion (involving von Weizsaecker, Senator Terry Sanford, Ambassador Sol Linowitz, and myself) were broadcast over C-Span, our first entry into that medium.

The end was still not yet. Our award of the medal to the German president had no ulterior designs behind it, but soon afterwards it began to occur to me that, especially with the fall of “the wall” that very November, Germans were at a pivotal point in their readiness to move into a new future and that von Weizsaecker may have been a signal of their willingness to deal with an evil Nazi past in a more open way than they had dealt with it in the '60s and '70s. Would some group of German church leaders, perhaps members and survivors of the Resistance Movement, help Union to establish and endow a faculty chair in the name of Bonhoeffer? The answer was a stronger “yes” than most of us dared to

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believe. I can report that our German friends have now raised an endowment of almost a million dollars, which has been matched by Union's own fundraising, so that on February 15, 1994, we inaugurated this chair, replete with a new funded lecture program that will involve Union and German scholars and public figures for the next foreseeable years.

On top of all of this, in exquisite expression of what this whole development has been about, on April 5, 1992, Union sponsored and organized a memorial concert in honor of "Heroes of Conscience" in the German Resistance Movement, particularly Bonhoeffer and his brother-in-law, Hans von Dohnanyi. The orchestra of this occasion was assembled from first-chair musicians of a dozen major orchestras in Europe and the United States, was conducted by Christoph von Dohnanyi and included in its front row the concertmaster of the Israel Philharmonic and cellist Dietrich Bethge. Many of these performers said afterwards that it was the most significant musical event of their careers. Not only was the concert broadcast live over National Public Radio, but it has subsequently been televised by more than 100 Public Broadcasting stations around the country. Probably nothing in 20 years has afforded Union so valuable an exposure to the public, and the value consists of a marvelous knitting-together of modern historical crisis, prophetic Christian courage, high art, and theology wrung out of suffering.

I had announced my intent to resign as president when all of these things began to come together in the summer of 1990. They are the results of an institutional trek whose end could not possibly have been predicted 15 years ago. And the end—in both senses—is still not yet.

I am concluding my narrative and analysis with this story because it constitutes not only the most satisfying personally initiated project of my time at Union but as a way of thanking God that I did not quit this job, when I was tempted to, in the spring of 1976! A president's efforts over time will get cluttered with many false starts and sheer failures. Without some successes from time to time none of us is likely to endure the failures. Yet when those successes come, they often have about them the air of divine grace, which is why I am quite serious about thanking God for this series of events, which have the quality of a happening more than that of personal achievement. I know, in all candor, that it would not have happened without me, but, as my German colleague and chief fundraiser for the project in Germany said to me at the end of my first visit with him in Berlin, "We must remember that we are succeeding in this because of Bonhoeffer, not because of us." And we have succeeded because hundreds of others have joined us in this cause.

Had Bonhoeffer been there to join that conversation, he would probably have recalled his letter about our privilege of being “a fragment in the hands of God.” At some points in our personal and collective histories, Christians really do have that privilege confirmed to them in their own experience. Presidents of seminaries will sometimes have that experience, too. It is what keeps them, as pilgrims, “keeping on.”

On Becoming a Seminary President: Reflections on My Early Years at Hartford Seminary

Barbara Brown Zikmund

Hartford Seminary

When I was growing up in a middle-class home in Detroit, Michigan, in the 1950s, I became very involved in my local church, Mayflower Congregational Church. It was the '50s and going to church was a popular thing. I was active in the youth choir, the youth fellowship, church camp, and in my last year of high school I was the president of the state-wide Pilgrim Fellowship. I had never met a woman minister, but somewhere in those years I decided that I wanted to prepare myself to work in the church. The church was the place where I was able to give fully of my talents and where I felt appreciated. The church was the spiritual, social, and intellectual center of my life.

My parents were church people. Mother played the organ and Dad sang in the choir. We always went to church. We never talked about religion a great deal at home, but we lived our lives in the framework of church. We prayed before every meal and we contributed money and time to religious causes and organizations. I was fully myself in church and so it was natural for me to decide while I was in high school that I would go to seminary. In fact, I ended up being "in care" of my local Detroit association for seven years (through four years of college and three years of seminary).

I went to a small liberal arts college (Beloit College). From the beginning I prepared for seminary, but I really did not prepare for any particular form of ministry. In college I met my husband. He was planning to go to graduate school in political science. After I finished college we were married and went off to Duke University: I enrolled in the divinity school and he worked on his doctorate. Because he was preparing for college teaching (by this time it is the early 1960s), I began to think about campus ministry. I focused on religion in higher education and on American religious history. After three years I finished the B.D. (now M.Div.) degree. My home church, which had watched my progress with interest, invited me back to Detroit and I was ordained as a minister in the United Church of Christ in September 1964. I did not have an immediate call, but they (and I) wanted me to be ready. I was set to serve as a campus minister wherever my husband got a job.

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As it turned out my husband was offered a one-year position as an instructor at Duke. So there I was for another year. I went into the graduate religious studies office and asked what it would take for me to do a Ph.D. After all, I reasoned, universities were places where credentials counted. If I had a doctorate, my credibility as a campus chaplain would be enhanced. I was able to build on my seminary studies and do all of the additional course work for the Ph.D. in one year. The following summer I passed my comprehensive examinations and languages, and we left North Carolina with only the dissertation between me and a Ph.D. It was a demanding and exhilarating time.

For the next four years I worked on the dissertation and taught at two small colleges and one university in the Philadelphia area. My husband served as a faculty member at Temple University. I liked the teaching and I began to think about teaching in a seminary. Until I finished the dissertation, however, that was irrelevant.

Finally it was completed. By that time, however, I was almost 30 years old and my husband and I decided to move back to the Midwest where we could be closer to our aging parents. We also decided to have a family. In 1969 we moved to Albion, Michigan, where he became a faculty member at Albion College and I had a baby. For about six months I was a full-time mother. It was not long, however, before I was involved in the college—doing teaching while someone was on sabbatical, offering an experimental course on women and changing society, leading special workshops in continuing education for women, participating in a National Endowment for the Humanities program, and writing grant proposals for the development office. I also became active in local politics, becoming the first woman elected to the local city council. I did interim and supply ministry in United Church of Christ congregations in southern Michigan.

These years gave me important experiences that laid a solid foundation for later responsibilities. Running my campaign and dealing with public opinion on the city council was an education in civic and organizational responsibility. I found that I was good at giving speeches and working to find political solutions. I was a swing vote on the council and I enjoyed the power and influence that gave me. My experience with city government also gave me good training in finances. In fact, some of the best financial education I have received came during those years. Finally I learned that one citizen could make a difference. More importantly, I learned that I could make a difference. I felt that God was preparing me for something.

During my Albion years I also served as an interim pastor in several nearby churches. This was fun. I preached and taught. I learned about the nitty-gritty

of local congregational life. As a young mother I mobilized local parents to start a Montessori school for our preschool children.

It was during this period of my life that I became a feminist. My father died very suddenly in early 1970. My mother, who had been a good wife and mother, but who had never worked outside the home, was helpless. As I helped my mother put her life back together, I got in touch with my anger at the world that had done this to my mother. As the feminist movement gained momentum I was committed to “raising the awareness” of the church about the needs and gifts of women. I became more assertive about talking with women’s groups and individual women about their vocations.

By the mid-1970s my husband and I began to think about a move. In spite of my active visibility in the community (Albion was a city of 12,000), it was clear that the college was never going to grant me any permanent standing as long as my husband was on the faculty.

About that time Chicago Theological Seminary (a United Church of Christ seminary) began a search for a woman faculty member. As the numbers of women attending seminaries rose in the 1970s there was increasing pressure to have women on seminary faculties. I was in the right place at the right time. In 1975 I was invited to accept an appointment at Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS) as its only woman faculty member. We moved to Chicago (my husband’s home town), and suddenly I was able to put my commitment to ministry, to teaching, to service, and to feminism all together into one package. As our son entered first grade and my husband was offered a position at nearby Illinois Institute of Technology, it seemed that God had a plan for me in theological education.

I loved working in a seminary. In that setting all the various aspects of my identity could exist in relationship to one another and I felt “together.” Within a year I took on administrative responsibilities coordinating student programs in addition to teaching. I was happy and productive. We settled into Chicago for the long haul. Both my husband and I had challenging jobs near family, and we could not imagine moving anywhere.

God and Pacific School of Religion (PSR), however, had other ideas. As one of the few theological seminary faculty women in the 1970s with a doctorate, as well as experience in seminary administration, I was a rare commodity. PSR was looking for a new academic dean. Although initially I was afraid to consider this possibility because I did not know how such a move could work for my family, eventually (in 1980) I responded to the invitation to go to Berkeley and take on this new challenge. As I said when we made the decision, “God was leading us where we did not plan to go.” My husband was proud of my accomplishments

and open to the idea. After a six-month transition, he found an academic appointment at a San Francisco bay area small college. We had done it again. Thank you, Lord.

Working at PSR was wonderful. The West Coast environment was challenging. The president and I developed a superb working relationship. My skills as an administrator and teacher fit the setting. I grew “in wisdom and stature . . .” and found being a “dean” in a theological school very rewarding. In 1984 I did a presentation and wrote a piece for The Association of Theological Schools on being a seminary dean. I became an informal consultant to persons (especially women) considering administrative assignments in theological education. I thrived.

Why Did I Become a Seminary President?

When the president at PSR went on leave, after I had been there for a few years, I served as “acting president” for a semester. Although some things were put off until the next semester, many presidential responsibilities were mine during his absence. I had watched presidents do “their jobs” as a faculty member and then as an administrator at Chicago Theological Seminary. At Pacific School of Religion I had worked very closely with the president. I decided that being “acting president” would be a good test for me to determine if I ever wanted to be a president myself. I was eager to see how I liked “being in charge.”

In many ways I enjoyed it. I gained confidence in my ability to make hard decisions. I liked the feeling of overall responsibility that comes only to a president. But it was also a stressful time—partly because I had to keep all of my own job as dean going *and* be the president as well. I did not physically move my office. I had all of the work and little of the informal support for the position. When the president returned from his leave I was happy to go back to the dean’s office full-time and “catch up” with my own world. I told the president and the faculty that I didn’t want to be a president. I liked being dean.

After that experience, the prestige and glory of a “presidency” lost its luster. I was less and less interested or impressed with the idea of becoming a president of any theological school. Furthermore, as I became more deeply involved in ATS, meeting presidents and learning a great deal about other seminaries, I got a very realistic picture of the presidency. The glamour was gone. It was a lot of work. The problems of some schools were enormous. By the late 1980s I had no innocent illusions about the glories of the chief executive officer’s job. I heard the stories and saw the struggles of presidents. I was happy to be a dean. Further-

more, as the years went by and I watched presidencies open up and fill up, I came to feel that there were fewer and fewer schools that had anything more attractive to offer than where I was.

The 1980s were a time when more and more women were moving into administrative responsibilities in seminaries. Because of my work in ATS (eventually I became the first woman president of the Association), I was constantly consulted to suggest names for open positions and to give references. I thought a great deal about what type of leadership was needed in theological education. I talked with women about taking on administrative leadership and pushed hard to get people to interview women for key administrative positions. Yet, when I was personally asked if I would allow my name to be considered for several presidencies, I said "no." I could not think of another place where I wanted to be. I was convinced that theological education in the San Francisco bay area was where God had called me. I also was clear that I had a child in high school, and I was not moving anywhere until my son went off to college.

In 1988-89 I was eligible for a full-year sabbatical leave. I had had a semester sabbatical when I first came to PSR (part of the agreement when I left CTS before taking my sabbatical there). The fact of the matter was that one semester did not really get me away from the administrative work. It seemed that everything was just put on hold until I returned the second semester. After that experience I vowed that if I ever was able to take a sabbatical again while I was dean, it would have to be for a whole year.

By 1988-89 that year arrived. I was tired of the administrative cycle and I knew that I needed to get away. Furthermore, my son had gone off to college. It was time to seriously consider the next steps in my vocational journey. During that sabbatical year I allowed myself to consider other options. It was a good year, which I spent as a visiting scholar at the women's history library at Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I watched CEOs at theological schools in the Boston area. I allowed myself to become a candidate for the deanship of a major university divinity school. It was an interesting interview, but it was not a good match. By comparison, my job at PSR looked more and more attractive.

During that year, I seriously considered running for the presidency of my denomination, the United Church of Christ. It was an awesome experience when top church leaders invited me to consider that possibility. But after much conversation and prayer, I did not run. At the same time a number of people also talked with me about becoming a candidate for the position of executive director of The Association of Theological Schools. I was deeply involved in ATS, but finally decided that I wanted more direct contact with students and church.

When the sabbatical year was over I returned to Pacific School of Religion refreshed and very glad to be back. I had some new ideas about education and church. I had new energy and vision about theological education in the Graduate Theological Union. I liked being the dean. That first semester back was also the time for my second five-year review as faculty member and dean. Although I had been made a full professor and appointed to a second five-year term as dean at the end of my first five years at PSR, I had never been granted tenure. With this review (in my ninth year at the school), I was up for tenure and for reappointment to a third five-year term as dean.

When the faculty votes were counted I was recommended for tenure, but I was not voted a third term as dean. This vote was a total surprise—to me, to the president, and to many people. I knew that I had not always pleased everyone, and that my academic productivity might not merit tenure in the eyes of some, but I did not expect to be denied the dean's office. The action of the faculty placed the president in an impossible position and left the faculty divided. Friends and trustees of the school who had appreciated my leadership were aghast and angry. I was deeply hurt and perplexed. What to do?

With the gift of hindsight it is clear that the vote was the result of several factors. Some of my faculty colleagues felt that no one should be dean for more than two five-year terms. They cited the fact that several major universities have a policy that limits deans to 10 years of service. Other faculty members objected to my leadership style. They had liked things while I was gone and resented my return. I am sure that I made some faculty nervous when I said that I was glad to be back and that I really "enjoyed" being dean. It is common for faculty to resist any idea that administration might be sought or enjoyed, and therefore I was suspect when I did not consider it a duty to be endured. Others no doubt remembered something that I had done, or maybe had not done for them, and wanted me out of a power position. Some of the votes may have been votes against the president, who clearly wanted me to continue as dean. For good or for ill, when all of these reasons came together, the vote made it clear that I could continue as a faculty colleague, but not as the dean. Curious.

The vote also had a ripple effect, creating an institutional crisis about administrative structures and accountability at PSR. Although I was in the middle of it, I could do nothing about it. I pondered whether it was best for the school for me to stay or to leave. Although, if I am honest, I really did not worry too much about "hurting the school" for the first few months. I prayed for guidance and strength to do the right thing—for me and for PSR.

After the shock and anger of that vote, which came in mid-December 1989, I began to think about new possibilities. It was clear that being away for the

whole year before my review had been a mistake. Memories were vague and my new energy was threatening. I do believe, although I don't want to, that some of the resistance was gender-related. Although the pseudo-feminist rhetoric at PSR was always politically correct, subconsciously I am sure that several of the faculty were very uncomfortable with a woman having power over their lives. I was troubled that certain dissatisfactions had not surfaced before the vote. I can deal with the fact that some faculty might not choose to have me as dean, but the way they let me know was cruel. I have since come to realize that the results of that vote were just as much a surprise to them as to me. The coalition of negatives, which I spelled out above, had never been discussed, and the final vote caught everyone off guard.

My first reaction was to think about leaving. It was hard to imagine living with colleagues as a faculty member who had just said that they did not want me as their dean. After several months, however, I got more sensible. There were many satisfactions at Pacific School of Religion and the Graduate Theological Union. I had tenure. I concluded that this might be the beginning of a new chapter in my life. Yet even as I affirmed my conviction that theological education in Berkeley, California, was still a worthy calling, I emotionally opened myself to explore other options. Although I did not have to move, when friends asked me what I was going to do, I began responding that I probably would leave PSR sometime, but I was not running away.

During the spring of 1990 several things happened: First, an institution in the East asked me to consider becoming its dean. I knew the president quite well and I had a good feeling about the possibility. I liked being a dean. Here was a chance to continue that role in a new place where I would be appreciated. Maybe I could learn from some of my mistakes at PSR and become an even better dean. I talked with the president of that seminary at length. We began to set up a visit for an interview. It was not a United Church of Christ seminary, however, and when the conversation began to get serious, I did some hard thinking. I realized that I was too deeply involved in the United Church of Christ to be the dean of a seminary in another denominational tradition. That was an important insight.

Meanwhile an old friend from the UCC (who was on the board at Hartford Seminary) wrote and called inviting me to consider becoming a candidate for the presidency of Hartford Seminary. At first I really wasn't interested. I did not know much about Hartford, but I was not attracted to the idea of being a president. Furthermore, I did not have a very good feeling about Hartford. One day when I was talking with my husband about the "Hartford possibility," he asked me why I was so negative about Hartford. I had a hard time answering his question. The more I thought about it, however, the more I got in touch with an

old memory about Hartford. Shortly after finishing my graduate work at Duke, one of my favorite professors left Duke and went to Hartford. He had been there only a year or two when I heard that he and other faculty members had been fired and the seminary had phased out most of its programs. I was angry. Any school that could treat people in such a callous way was suspect. I had not thought about Hartford in years, but I began to realize that my resistance to even “talking with people from Hartford” was grounded in this memory.

Once I understood that I was not giving the Hartford option a fair hearing, I became more open. Hartford was historically related to the UCC. Several members of the search committee threatened to come to San Francisco to see me. I protested. We finally agreed to meet in New York city where I would be attending an upcoming meeting. I was willing to talk, but I did not want to feel any obligation. A date was set for a meeting with two trustees at a restaurant in New York for an exploratory “conversation.”

The meeting was very stimulating. I learned a great deal about Hartford and I liked what I learned. At the end of the evening they asked if we could continue the conversation and if I would come to Hartford for a visit. I was neutral. It might be worth a closer look, yet I remained wary. I did not want to “jump at the first thing that came down the pike.” In my anger and vulnerability about the PSR decision, I did not trust my judgment. I was afraid that I might take another position simply “to show them” that others valued my leadership. I knew that this was not a good reason to consider moving or becoming a president.

My personal exploration of the Hartford option was very slow and deliberate. I was open to further conversations. I did not need to move. I continually tested my feelings and questioned my motives. I asked the people at Hartford to send me more information, and I began to talk with others in theological education about what they thought about me becoming the president of Hartford Seminary. I was still more interested (if I was going to move) in being a dean, than being a president, but I decided that maybe God was leading me into a new opportunity. I wrote in my journal, talked to my family and friends, prayed for guidance, and tried to remain open. I planned a trip to Hartford.

Two things happened: first, a number of people who knew me, and who knew a lot more about Hartford than I did, were very excited about the idea of me at Hartford. They thought it was a wonderful match: Hartford Seminary was small and flexible, it was committed to interfaith studies, it had a nationally recognized research center, it was connected historically to Congregationalism and the United Church of Christ, it had a unique program in lay ministry, it was doing interesting things for women, it was strengthening ministry, and it was small enough and affluent enough to enable me to continue my scholarship, my

educational and ecumenical church involvements, and take on new administrative responsibilities. Furthermore, people who knew it well thought that Hartford Seminary was really ready to call a woman president.

Second, these conversations pushed me to ponder the challenge of becoming a seminary president, if not at Hartford, then at some other seminary. Some people maintained that I owed it to the theological education community. I had been advocating and supporting the movement of women into administrative leadership in theological education for more than a decade, and it was time—time for me personally to take on a “top position.” In essence, I needed to practice what I had been preaching. Although I was resistant to that line of reasoning, I was influenced by it. I do believe that vocational decisions are contextual. Sometimes the “call” to service is external, driven by the needs of the world, and sometimes it is a personal choice. Maybe, I began to think, maybe I had a responsibility to take on a presidency in order to be a good steward of my gifts. Maybe I ought to become a “president,” but I was still not sure whether Hartford was “the right presidency,” or this was “the right time.” I listened when people who knew me well said that I should not retreat into a “faculty role,” nor just take another “parallel deanship.” It was troublesome, but when friends said that I needed to become a president to exercise some important educational leadership, I tried to listen. As the spring unfolded, the question changed—it was not whether I should become a president, but when and where?

What about Hartford? As I learned more about Hartford and listened to others, I began to see amazing ways in which my past and my recent experiences had prepared me not only to be the president of a seminary, but perhaps to be the president of Hartford Seminary. The linkages were uncanny:

1. While I was on my sabbatical I had been doing research on the history of ordination. I was becoming convinced that contemporary churches needed to expand their understandings of ministry and get beyond “defining ministry in terms of the clergy.” In the late 1970s I had given an important speech at the UCC General Synod on the “ministry of the laity.” I discovered that Hartford Seminary did not have an M.Div. program but spent a major portion of its energies supporting the ministry of the laity, articulating a theology which I already embraced.

2. During my years at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), I became involved in a research project on congregational life in the San Francisco bay area. We studied local congregations and tried to determine how they differed from congregations in other parts of the country. In that work I learned about research in “congregational studies” at Hartford and in Chicago. I already had

a growing appreciation for congregational studies as an approach to theological education—and at Hartford the entire D.Min. program is built around congregational studies.

3. As a teenager in Detroit, Michigan, I grew up in a mainly Jewish neighborhood. Probably my own decision in the 1950s to go to seminary and prepare for some form of church vocation grew out of my efforts to figure out who Jesus was and why I was a Christian. I know that my deep involvement in the church during high school was shaped by that context. Over the years I continued to study and struggle with the relationship of Christianity to other religions. And since moving to California in 1980, experiencing the interreligious mix of the GTU, and traveling in Asia, I had renewed my conviction that questions of globalization, interfaith relations, and Christian mission had to be high on the future agenda of theological education. In fact, in my last year at PSR I was working on a “mission” conference funded by the Luce Foundation that explored the question of Christian witness in a multifaith world. My son was dating a Jewish woman, whom he eventually married. Hartford Seminary had a unique history of mission education which had been transformed in recent times into a major commitment to interfaith relations through a Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations.

It seems that God was preparing me to be the president of Hartford Seminary long before I realized it.

As the winter turned to spring, my discernment process came down to three options: the presidency of Hartford Seminary, an executive position with the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, or staying at PSR.

On the one hand there was the presidency at Hartford. Part of its attraction was its size. As the president at Hartford I would not have to give up teaching. I could still do writing and research. I could retain some of the things I liked about being a dean and gain some of the leadership opportunities of a presidency. It was an unusual place and the people seemed ready to respond to new leadership. Furthermore, the financial picture at Hartford was strong. I knew that I did not want to take on the presidency of a financially distressed institution.

During my years at PSR, following my attendance at the 1983 Vancouver Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), I had become deeply involved in the work of the Programme on Theological Education of the WCC. Serving on its commission I had traveled widely and found my thinking about education and the church stretched and energized by those relationships. In the spring of 1990 I was approached to consider a staff position at the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland. It was an exciting option which I explored

very seriously. In April my husband and I made a trip to Geneva to find out what was involved. We learned some important things. Although the position for me at the WCC was extremely attractive, it quickly became clear that such a move would be a disaster for my husband. The Swiss government will not grant work permits to spouses of WCC employees and if he moved to Switzerland he would be unemployed. As interesting as the job was, we did not want to live on two continents, and I knew that I could not make a decision that would send *me* all over the world and leave him stranded in Switzerland with nothing to do. My marriage is flexible and my husband is supportive, but I was not prepared to ask him to follow me into this kind of arrangement.

Obviously, I could continue at PSR as a tenured faculty member.

I should say here that my husband has been and continues to be a most supportive personal and professional consultant. After the December vote when I talked about leaving, I discovered that he was interested in a professional change. As we considered our future he told me that he wanted to leave his current position in the next year or so (at that time he was the dean of a small independent college in the bay area). If I decided to stay at PSR, he was ready to search for another position in the bay area. If I wanted to go somewhere else, that was fine. He was uneasy, however, about me taking two or three years to decide to move (perhaps soon after he had found a new position locally). This knowledge gave me freedom to think big and a bit of a nudge to do something sooner, rather than later—we did not need to stay in California. He was not merely willing to move; he was eager to move.

The spring of 1990 was filled with possibilities and decisions. Not only did we make the trip to Europe, we also traveled to Hartford to weigh that option. In early May I told Hartford that I would accept its invitation.

Back at Pacific School of Religion it was a bittersweet time. When I told some of my PSR colleagues that I was leaving, they were stunned. At least one of those who had voted against me continuing as dean, admitted that he never thought that it would come to this. No one would openly fault me for leaving, but several people looked at my decision to go to Hartford as a mistake. One person actually told me that I could “do better than that,” but under the circumstances he understood why I had to take the offer. When I tried to explain that I did not feel that I had to leave and that the Hartford presidency had a genuine attraction, he (and others) refused to believe me. Many people interpreted my decision as “leaving PSR,” rather than “going to Hartford.” Yet, when the farewells were over and the moving day came, I was eager to test my gifts in a presidential role. Hartford became more and more attractive. Two days before the movers came to pack us up for the trek east, my husband was offered a job as the director of

research for the department of higher education for the state of Connecticut. I took that as a sign that God was with us.

What Have I Done and What Do I Do as President?

My role as a president is shaped by the unique history of Hartford Seminary. In 1972, the seminary ran into severe financial difficulties. It had considered merging with another school. It considered moving to a different location. In the end the board of trustees determined to stay independent and to stay in Hartford, but to change the mission of the seminary. Instead of preparing people *for* ordained or professional ministries as pastors, Christian educators, and missionaries, the board abolished all degree programs and became a resource center *for* congregations and persons (lay and ordained) who were already engaged in ministries. In dramatic, but responsible actions, the board took a series of votes that reduced the size of the faculty, sold most of the campus buildings and built a new building nearby, and sold the major research holdings of the library to a university-related divinity school library. The money gained was used to build the new building and to strengthen the endowment. The seminary launched an innovative program focused exclusively upon contextual support for churches and their leaders.

The new CAMP program (church and ministry program) of the seminary was an educationally innovative venture. The seminary decided to offer a Doctor of Ministry degree in the mid-1970s when this new professional degree emerged on the scene. For a time some of the Islamic faculty were placed at McGill University (with Hartford funding) to carry on the legacy of the Kennedy School of Missions. Back in Hartford a creative social science research program began to take shape under new faculty initiative. Innovative and creative faculty leaders began to give Hartford a new identity.

In retrospect it is clear that only a very small group of trustees fully understood what a radical adventure the "1972 decision" had launched. As the years went by some members of the board of trustees did not like what was happening. They thought that the seminary lacked intellectual rigor. In the search for a new president some five years into the new era, some trustees argued for a more classic "academic" leader. The Hartford Seminary Foundation, in the early decades of the 20th century, had been led by presidents with strong academic standards and a clear scholarly agenda. Recent presidents had come to the office from positions in pastoral ministry, rather than the academy. Now the board felt that the new president needed to be a scholar who could

clarify the current program and protect the intellectual future of the institution. They chose a seasoned administrative leader.

It was an interesting choice. The new president was very clear about his mandate to restore the academic excellence of the school. He walked into an ambiguous situation which had developed after the painful 1972 decision. He did some important things, tightening standards and conserving the strengths of the institution. He brought the Islamic studies faculty/program back to Hartford. He worked with the board to sell the last part of the old campus and to build a new award-winning building to symbolize the new Hartford Seminary. He hired some wonderful new faculty who stayed with the seminary for more than a decade—a creative Roman Catholic sister with skills in liturgy and the arts, an ethicist-theologian with an interest in public policy, and an African-American biblical scholar deeply involved in the ecumenical movement. He encouraged the development of a very successful non-degree Black Ministries Certificate Program.

Some people, however, found his style troublesome. Rumor had it that if you were on his good list, life was fine. But if for some reason he decided that you were not acceptable, you were finished. The people who lived through that era often speak of it as a “reign of terror.” Lunch with the president was a dreaded thing—because it usually meant that you no longer had a job. According to the *Hartford Courant*, during his five years as president more than 45 people were hired. The seminary did not even have 45 employees, so this meant that some positions were filled two and even three times. During his tenure the whole institution revolved around the president. By-laws were changed to give crucial decision-making powers to the president and trustees. Faculty were hired on five-year contracts with no tenure; indeed they were not called faculty, they were staff.

After five years this president retired. Many breathed a sigh of relief. Some members of the board viewed his presidency as a difficult, but necessary correction. Others considered it a disaster.

The next president, who arrived in 1983, was trained theologically, but came to the presidency from employment in business with the Cummins Engine Company. Early in his career he had been an assistant to a seminary president. He worked with management issues and he was interested in applying some of his insights to theological education. Although he had an earned doctorate, he was neither an academic nor a pastor.

The next five years (1983-1989) were an important time of transition. In a real sense, this presidency was an “interim” ministry. The new president came into

On Becoming a Seminary President

a traumatized institution. With appropriate pastoral sensitivity he reassured the faculty and staff that everything was “going to be all right.” His presidency was a time of healing. He put the house in order, reassured employees, friends, and others that the seminary could be trusted, and made some important commitments to affirmative action.

Personally, however, this president did not thrive on the intensity of the job and its hard decisions. Everything came to the president’s office and he was easily drained by the job. Although he was often uncomfortable with the extensive power vested in the office, he was not able to make many changes. As a consequence his presidency was a time of maintenance and re-establishing confidence. In some ways the seminary remained a dysfunctional family, plagued by mutual dependencies and latent paranoias.

Nevertheless, during this president’s short tenure the by-laws were revised and an effort was made to do some planning. The president spent a great deal of time on process. Coming from outside theological education, he encouraged the faculty to set the academic agenda. The problem was that the faculty had no common vision for the institution. They did not know how to work together, having survived by functioning as individuals, protecting personal interests. As a consequence, faculty meetings operated by consensus with very few votes. If people could not agree, they just kept talking until the matter faded away. When and if votes were taken, there was a tacit understanding that each person/center could do its thing as long as it did not intrude into other parts of the operation, or encumber other faculty resources. There was very little mutual accountability, and even less shared responsibility.

Yet, this presidency took some important steps:

1. There was increased commitment to a balance between research and educational programs at the seminary, and a conviction that research ought to inform teaching and “loop” back to shape research. The Center for Social and Religious Research obtained several large grants and became a nationally recognized resource.

2. When a longtime Islamics faculty member (who had been dean during the 1972 decision) retired, a new director of the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations was appointed to strengthen the seminary’s commitment to interfaith relations. The seminary began to explore the appointment of a Muslim to the faculty.

3. Educational programs at the seminary expanded dramatically, with enrollments doubling in five years. In the midst of this growth the seminary refined its commitment to lay ministry and to programs for women. It made

several new faculty and administrative appointments to meet burgeoning administrative needs.

The capacity of Hartford Seminary to claim its new identity gained momentum during this second five-year presidency. A helpful year-long interim presidency, under a faculty member who had come to the seminary shortly after the 1972 decision, set the stage for further change. Consequently, when I became president in 1990, the search committee indicated that it wanted me to bring the various arenas of seminary activity into even more cohesive unity. The committee noted that people were confused about Hartford Seminary. Some people still thought of it as training young males for the priesthood/ordained ministry. Others thought that it had closed. Still others knew only one part of its work: social and religious research, the Doctor of Ministry program, Christian-Muslim relations, lay ministry, or the Black Ministries Certificate Program.

During the preceding decade the faculty had built protective enclaves. The Center for Social and Religious Research did its thing, and the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations developed its constituencies. Each faculty member had a special "territory" in the seminary's programs. Everyone functioned psychologically, if not financially, as a separate entity.

One experience highlighted the situation. During my first year as president, I was asked to preach at a large Congregational church in a nearby Connecticut town. On that Sunday morning when I showed up half an hour before the service, I noticed in the bulletin an announcement that one of my colleagues from the Macdonald Center was leading a "second hour" program following the service. First of all I was dismayed that there had been no internal communication alerting me that two of us were going to be in the same church that Sunday. More troublesome, however, was fact that when I commented on the educational program, the pastor asked (in all seriousness) if I knew anything about the "Macdonald Center" in Hartford, which was sending a speaker to lead an educational program on Islam after worship. He and others in that congregation, which had been relating to Hartford Seminary for years, had no idea that the Macdonald Center was part of Hartford Seminary.

During my first year as president three things took up most of my energy:

1. a systematic effort to develop a more unified understanding of the mission or purpose of the seminary;
2. an examination of the financial situation of the seminary and the implementation of new spending and investment management policies; and
3. the development of more collegial and mutually accountable ways to order the internal administrative life of the seminary.

On Becoming a Seminary President

We started with the mission/purpose statement. In the first six months of my presidency we had many discussions about what we were doing and how we could gather it all together into one single statement. As a newcomer I asked many questions. The faculty was used to talking, and talking things to death, and never making a decision. There was a joke that the faculty never voted; people were afraid to disagree because it brought back bitter memories. As we worked on a purpose statement I took very direct leadership—putting together phrases and forcing votes on the priorities of specific wording. I did not ask that we develop a “new” purpose, as much as I wanted us to articulate clearly “what it was that we were already doing.” The goal was to come up with a “singleness” of understanding of the seminary. I was very directive in this process. I wanted a statement that was simple and memorable, that could clarify the seminary’s identity. I wanted a positive statement, because it seemed to me that we had spent the past 15 years telling the world what we “were not” rather than helping people understand our present identity.

During my first six months there were hours of meetings with faculty, staff, students, and eventually the board of trustees to discuss the new purpose statement. Finally a new statement was affirmed by the faculty and passed by the board in February of my first year. The thesis sentence of the statement provides a memorable way of embracing all aspects of the seminary’s work. “Hartford Seminary is an educational institution seeking to serve God by supporting faithful living in a multi-faith and pluralistic world.”

When the statement was finished, I think that some of the faculty were surprised and a bit shocked. In fact, from the moment it was passed, there was grumbling that it had not gone through enough discussion. It was somehow illegitimate. Since its adoption, however, it has worn well. People who are new to the seminary like it and are developing a growing attachment to it.

When I arrived, the seminary was growing more intentional in the management of its finances. For many years the seminary had derived more than 60 percent of its annual income from the endowment. In recent years it had successfully reduced its dependency on endowment, but there was a need to develop clearer spending guidelines and to explore more aggressive investment management. Up until my arrival the budgeting process involved asking the investment managers at the bank (who had managed the seminary portfolio for years) how much money the endowment would earn this year and then building a budget on that basis. There was always a surplus at the end of the year and that was swept into the plant fund.

As the 1980s came to an end and the earning power of the endowment began to shrink, changes were needed. The seminary, however, had grown dependent

upon certain levels of endowment income and asked the managers to keep up a high return. The year that I arrived the managers told the investment committee that things needed to change. They were feeling very limited in their investment options (e.g., putting more into utilities than was prudent) in order to keep income levels high. One hour before my first board of trustees meeting in October 1990, the bankers showed up in my office with the news that because of the lower earning power of the endowment, we should anticipate a sizable current year deficit (\$200,000).

This was ironic. In my discernment process, as I weighed the Hartford presidency, over and over people told me that I did not need to worry about money. Hartford Seminary was on a solid financial base.

Yet almost immediately the financial area was where I needed to focus my attention. As the dean of a seminary for 10 years I knew a great deal about educational programming and faculty, but I had not worked with a board around financial issues. During that first year I read a great deal and tried to get board committees to recognize that we had a problem. Because many people were still operating with the illusion that Hartford Seminary had piles of money after selling its library and campus, some trustees refused to believe that we had a problem.

A breakthrough in this impasse came when I decided to hire an outside consultant to do an analysis of the past decade's financial statements and to make a presentation to the board. The consultant was familiar with theological education (I knew him through ATS), and he made the case that we needed to establish a spending policy and that we needed to reevaluate the management of the endowment to "make it grow" and to protect us from outdistancing inflation. My first year learning curve on financial matters was very high.

During the first year it was also clear to me that some of the male trustees with financial expertise did not expect me (a woman) to deal with the "financial men's work." They were somewhat bothered and a little taken aback when I indicated my preference for certain things. Over time, however, we have worked together effectively—making important decisions about investment managers, our endowment spending policy, and the move to a total return investment philosophy.

Within the staff and faculty of the seminary during the first year I tried a number of things to build better internal collegiality and accountability. I personally led a Seminary off-site retreat for all employees. I instituted an all-seminary council, bringing together all faculty and staff into regular "town meetings" on matters that affect all employees. I expanded the number of people who attended faculty meetings—inviting key senior administrators (which

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added more women and minorities) to participate with voice and no vote. When it came time for the budget, I announced a budget schedule that involved consultation with the comptroller and the dean and gave everyone input in revisions and the final outcome (holding a seminary council meeting half-way through the process.) Suddenly the budget was not something created elsewhere, it was “ours.” I asked that the faculty meet with me and the dean in their annual work plan negotiations. These conversations were no longer opportunities to make private deals with the president. Furthermore, every faculty member was asked to share a copy of his or her work plan with all other faculty colleagues. Work loads and expectations were interconnected. What one faculty member did related to the work of his or her colleagues. All of this was calculated to create a greater awareness of mutual accountability.

Furthermore, in order to help Hartford Seminary coordinate its approaches to foundations and other funding sources, I created a group called the “external funding committee.” It brings together people from the centers and institutional advancement to coordinate our approaches to foundations and to plan our cultivation of key gifts from individuals. It has turned out to be a very creative think tank for ideas related to our future work. It is invaluable to me and the director of institutional advancement as we place priorities on our fundraising efforts. Obviously what you seek money for and what you get money for, shape the character of a school.

During the first year I also drew a new organizational chart showing every employee of the seminary and his or her supervisory and accountability relationships. It is not a hierarchical chart, rather it shows a circular network of relationships with the “faculty meeting” at the center. I did this very intentionally to diffuse the legacy of presidential power. I insisted that the old patterns were too presidentially dependent, and I announced that I was not going to make all of the decisions which past presidents had made. During the past few years I have refined it further and formally increased the responsibilities of the dean. (This was a delicate matter, because the dean had been an inside candidate for the presidency and I was not sure how we would work together or whether he would stay after I became the president.) Today the dean and I have a solid working relationship and the latest version of the organizational chart has the president and the dean in a team model of leadership with five clusters of program activity coordinated by the dean (degree programs, educational outreach, library, Macdonald Center, and Research Center), and the president working with administration and institutional advancement. Today people are feeling comfortable with this collaborative model of organization and it is working. I am clear that I must still make final decisions in many places, and

people know that, but the sense of shared involvement in the future of the seminary is energizing.

In order to assess how I spend my time and to assist me in setting priorities, I have developed a system where every six months I write a confidential report of what I have done during the past six months and what I set as high priority for the coming six months. I share this report with the officers of the board for critical feedback about my activities. In reading over these reports I find that my presidency has evolved in three stages.

During the first stage (a year or so), I put energy into creating structures and patterns within the seminary to draw us together as a single institution. We wrote the purpose statement, we refined lines of accountability and decision-making. I forced listening and learning about other parts of the seminary. I insisted that we work on the budget together. Some of this was done bureaucratically, but some of it was more symbolic. I was very intentional about the public statements I made in our weekly chapel services, in my own inauguration, in board meetings. Early on I decided that my own schedule should be public knowledge to erode the mystique of the “president’s office.” Now each Friday my assistant puts a copy of my upcoming weekly schedule in every employee’s mailbox.

This schedule sharing has had some interesting rewards. First of all, people are not wondering “what is the president doing?” or “why isn’t she here?” They know. They ask about my travels, remind me to remember things for certain meetings, and participate vicariously in my activities. Second, this shared information models an openness for other employees. We do not have to report all of our activities to colleagues, but it is helpful and encouraged.

The second phase of my presidency has been my own realization that I need to be much more intentional about human relationships. I have always been a competent “do it myself” style person. In the president’s office I have a new understanding that I cannot not do everything myself, and even if I could, that is not desirable. I am learning to give others in the seminary positive feedback and personal affirmation—and to let them do their jobs. I am learning that when the president says “good work,” people respond. As the economy of Connecticut has deteriorated during the past several years I have become intentional about making Hartford Seminary a safe and psychologically secure place to work. We have held retreats, special lunches, birthday parties, retirement celebrations, family outings. One March day everyone seemed depressed. I went to the local video store and got some cartoons. It was announced that we would have a “cartoon break.” For about half an hour we all watched silly cartoons, ate some popcorn, and laughed. People who work for the seminary

need to feel appreciated and whole. I am convinced that when faculty and staff feel this way, other things take care of themselves.

All this is to say that I am learning how the president affects the entire institution. What I wear and how I “participate” in the community is important. When I ride the bumper cars at the seminary picnic, dance at the Christmas party, or wear a silly costume on Halloween—it sends important messages.

In prior jobs I have been told that when I am busy I appear somewhat distant and formidable. I am always surprised at this, because I think of myself as friendly and approachable, but that has not been the case. Being the “president” means that there is a “presidential” distance that comes from the role. Since coming to Hartford Seminary I have intentionally tried to “work” at human relationships. I am learning that a little “small talk,” a thank you, a birthday card, or a moment of listening sets a tone. In a small institution what the president does affects the health of the entire school.

I am now in a third phase in my presidency. With clearer structures and good morale, I am becoming more aggressive about claiming a new kind of future for Hartford Seminary. In my Myers-Briggs scores I have always been an ESTJ (Extravert-Sensor-Thinker-Judger). During the past two years, however, I have changed. I am still a strong T and J, but I am now more of an I (Introvert); even more importantly, during the past three times I have taken the Myers-Briggs instrument, I have moved from being an S to an N (iNtuitive). This job is pulling me into the future. I am learning to trust my intuition and to be more sensitive to the intuitive challenges facing the seminary. I am taking more risks and anticipating possibilities, rather than just focusing upon the present. I feel good about this. It is a sign that I am more comfortable with the president’s role. I am maturing in the job. As I move beyond the tasks and structures of the institution and even beyond the important need to keep the people happy, I am gaining new confidence as a leader. I am not yet sure exactly how the future will unfold, but I am feeling ready for the challenge. I am grounded in a new confidence that I am doing the right thing. I am at peace that God is with me.

Job Satisfaction

Keeping all the balls in the air. Going home at night and having a sense that I dealt with complex difficult issues in a humane way. That I did it in the best way that it could have been done by anyone. That I made a difference in someone’s life. That God is pleased that I am here.

Being an effective ambassador for the seminary. Giving a speech or having a conversation that I know is making new friends and supporters for the seminary. Capturing in words a picture of our work that impresses and energizes those who start out ignorant (and even hostile) about the seminary. Helping new friends understand our programs, appreciate our research/outreach, and support us with time and money.

Enabling people (especially alumni/ae) who have been critical and upset with Hartford Seminary, since the 1972 decision, to change their minds. Turning around a disgruntled alumnus/a. Getting a contribution to the annual fund from someone who vowed that he or she would never give another nickel to Hartford Seminary.

Learning about the history of the various institutions that are part of our history and the creative way in which the story of the seminary has unfolded. Appreciating the legacy of gifted men and women who have led, and taught, and supported this institution in the past.

Modeling the fact that a woman can exercise institutional leadership in a collaborative and transformational way—building upon past patterns but working to reshape hierarchical habits. Upholding the reputation of women by being a good female president where a woman has never been.

Sharing decision-making with thoughtful and supportive staff colleagues who are committed to the seminary and who care about people. Not having to do difficult things alone.

Leading a seminary that is different. Pushing against the assumptions that ordained ministry is superior. Convincing able lay leaders to remain in their current settings newly empowered by a theology of the laity. Strengthening clergy in their ministries so that they can enliven tired congregations and revitalize themselves as Christian leaders. Providing educational resources for key Black and Hispanic church leaders who can keep their churches and minority families viable. Celebrating the spiritual resources of women and providing sanctuary for creative feminism. Cultivating an environment that offers hospitality to Jews, Christians, and Muslims and presses for interfaith understanding without forsaking its own Christian commitments. Sustaining a top-flight research program to explore current religious trends and support denominational and ecumenical leadership.

Working with a faculty and a board that are becoming increasingly confident and comfortable about their respective responsibilities.

General Challenges (Problems) in the Presidential Job

Thinking institutionally. Unfortunately I still find myself responding to things as an individual faculty member. I am still learning that everything I do has institutional consequences, just because I am president.

Getting faculty who have been at the seminary for many years to think more holistically about the place (not just in terms of their interests or center). Encouraging new faculty to make Hartford Seminary home. Helping colleagues think and plan collectively as a faculty. Encouraging the whole system to risk new programs and outreach.

Developing a stronger board of trustees that is willing to work and that feels needed. This is an important new challenge. It is no longer acceptable simply to bask in honor as a Hartford Seminary trustee. We are exploring a major financial campaign that will demand more from all of us.

Convincing trustees that I am knowledgeable and capable about finances and physical plant matters—and that it is better to do the “right” or “legal” thing than to do what “everyone else does.” (An incident: when I was uneasy about some building renovations that had been done before I became president, I asked staff to “invite the building inspector” to assess the situation. We were immediately given an order to bring the buildings up to code or pay \$300 a day in fines. Thanks and no thanks. This led to major renovations that had not been planned. However, I am pleased that today the residential units, which we are using as offices are up to code and “safe places” for employees to work.) This incident generated some interesting reactions. On the one hand I was doing the right thing, so it was difficult to fault me. On the other hand I was told that if I had consulted with someone, “something could have been done.”

I believe that we must do more to serve the sizable African-American community and the growing Latino population in the Hartford area. Finding funds in these communities and for the benefit of these communities is a big problem. There is a great need for M.Div. education for these groups. How do I achieve balance between these needs and the need to cultivate the white wealthy population that has resources which can secure the financial future of the school? There are days when I resent the choices I have to make.

Keeping enough time in my life for my own research and writing as a scholar of American religious history. I enjoy administration, but as my presidency develops and even succeeds, it will be easy for me to lose my identity as a teacher and a scholar.

Learnings Briefly Stated

There is a story behind each one of these comments. But briefly stated, since becoming the president of Hartford Seminary, I have learned:

- that building trust takes time, especially when people feel they have been betrayed by past leadership.
- that when the president makes a mistake, there is great power in offering an apology. It is especially effective in disarming an irate faculty member.
- that firing someone who cannot do the job actually raises staff morale.
- that personal handwritten notes at the bottom of letters lets people know that you are communicating with them.
- that giving pregnant women paid time off and being flexible about child care enable the seminary to keep good employees who might earn more money elsewhere. These women feel supported and especially loyal to us because we are flexible about family schedules.
- that doing the right thing (paying overtime, complying with IRS regulations, inviting the building inspector into the building, or keeping children out of buildings with lead paint) models institutional integrity.
- that wealthy people are flattered when you figure out what interests them and ask them to contribute a gift to support it.
- that being present and offering a prayer or bringing greetings at seminary events has important symbolic meaning.
- that it is important to know how to work the lights, the sound system, the copier, the telephone, the FAX machine, the coffee maker, the dictaphone, the computer and various printers, the mail room postage machine, the security alarms, the file systems where important papers are stored, and the heating and cooling controls. On a daily basis I do not deal with many of these things, yet as the president I need to know what to do in a pinch.
- that it is good to have a written policy, even if it is not followed every time.
- that there is a fine line between micro-managing when an employee ought to do something and not paying enough attention to what is being done by various employees.
- that many times the president needs to know, but no one needs to know that she knows.
- that good leadership requires risk.

On Becoming a Seminary President

Writing all these reflections has been a good exercise. I am learning more and more about myself and my institution with each passing day. I like being the president of Hartford Seminary, and I think that I am a good president. I also know that I can and will be a better one in the future.