



The Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers

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HOW MUCH
DOES IT COST?



The Association of Theological Schools/The Commission on Accrediting

Annual cost of theological education

Median Amount		Change Over Last 20 Years
\$53,800	amount spent per fte student	129% ↑
\$7,800	net tuition per fte student	97% ↑
\$1,025	amount per fte student given by religious organizations	-30% ↓



HOW MUCH
DO THEY OWE?



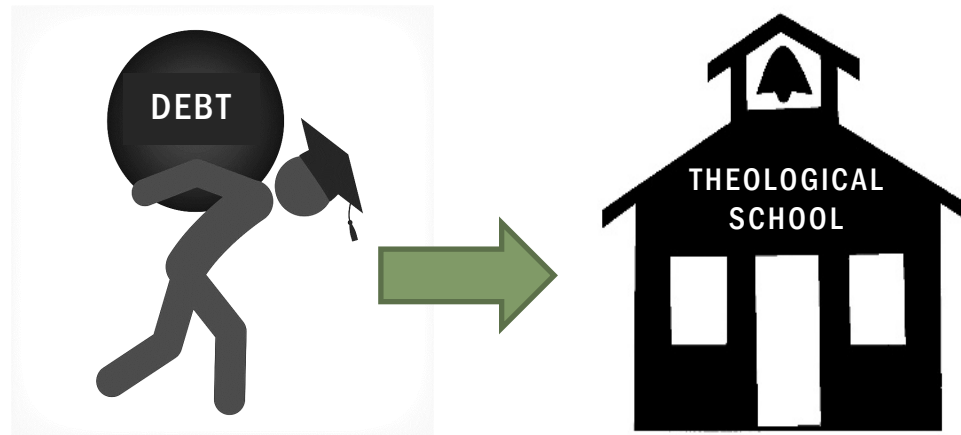
The Association of Theological Schools/The Commission on Accrediting

Student loans: what they *bring*

43% bring student loans to theological school

\$32,600 average amount of loans brought

\$5,700 increase in average amount brought since 2008



Student loans: *during theological school*

49% borrow for
theological school

\$35,700 average amount borrowed

\$8,700 increase in average amount
borrowed since 2008

GREATER IMPACT ON...

- **Black students**
 - Greater debt incurred
 - Less likely to be placed at graduation
 - More likely to serve bivocationally
- **Women students**
 - Greater debt incurred
 - Less likely to be placed at graduation
- **Older students**
 - Incurring similar debt
 - May interfere with retirement

Student loans: total at graduation

59% graduate with student loans

\$44,500 average amount student loans

\$8,300 increase in average amount since 2008





HOW DO THEY
PAY IT OFF?



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Loan repayment

How do alums pay off their loans?

- **Their salaries**
- **Their spouses' salaries**
- **Savings**

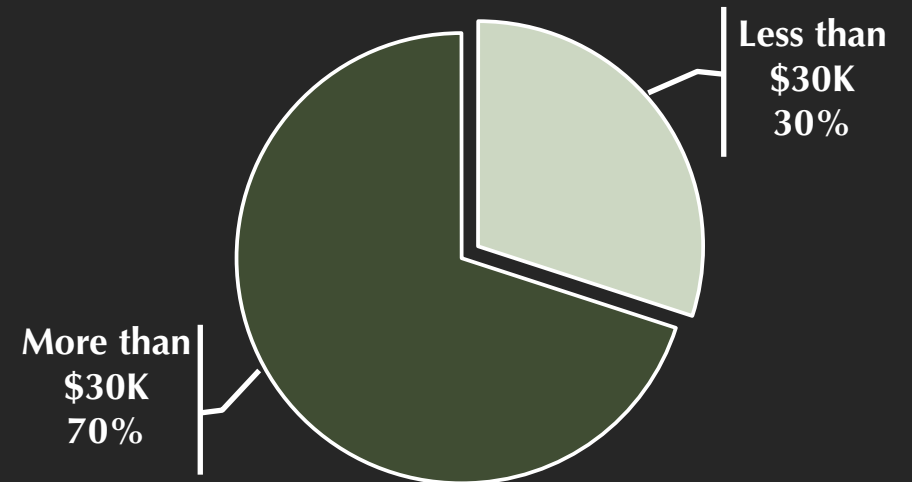
<10% received help from denominations or congregations

HOW MUCH DO ALUMS EARN?

\$47,500

Approximate average salary
1 to 5 years after graduation

Average Salary Per Year





WHAT IS
THE IMPACT?



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Impact of debt on alums

In the first five years...

38% take an extra job

33% seek a higher paying job

19% postpone healthcare



RETIREMENT?

50%

Alums with little to no retirement savings

58%

Borrowers with little to no retirement savings

31%

Don't know if they have adequate savings



WHAT IS
OUR RESPONSE?



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Educating students

Offering courses on:

- Entrepreneurial leadership
- Financial literacy and leadership
- Fundraising
- Theology of money
- Psychology of debt



THE ECFFM INITIATIVE

2,011 workshops
4,149 students
43 schools

99 courses
1,485 students
35 schools

offered in 2016

Lowering cost of attendance

Theological schools are...

- offering more flexible degrees
- shortening degrees
- raising additional funds for scholarships and operating expenses
- developing new economic models





IS IT MAKING
A DIFFERENCE?



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Yes, since 2016...

8%

decrease in students
who borrowed for
theological school

3%

decrease in those who
borrowed over \$40K

\$1,100

decrease in average
amount borrowed

During the first three years
of the ECFFM Initiative,

77%

of participating schools
saw a decrease in
borrowers or
educational debt

28%

saw a decrease
in both



Most Effective Solutions

- Addressing finances before seminary
- Providing one-on-one financial counseling
- Tracking the impact of debt on students
- And...

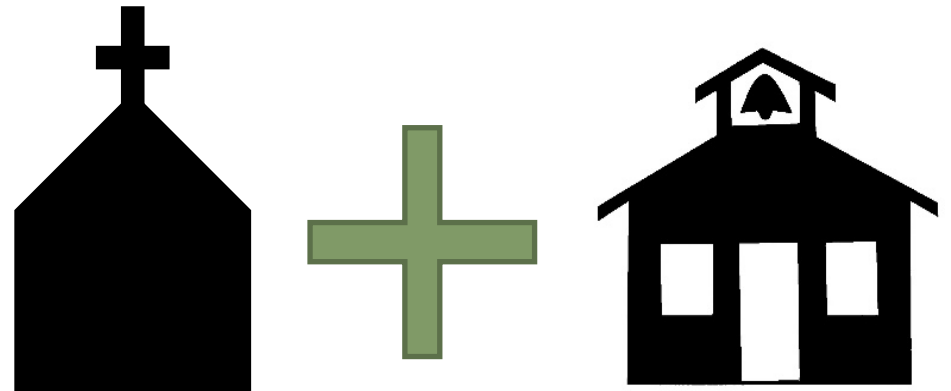
In 2016...

One-on-one counseling
at **37** schools
with **2,067** students



The positive effect of partnering with denominations

45% of ECFFM schools who partnered with denominations saw a decrease in educational debt of **\$2,500 or more** in the first **3 years** of the initiative



Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers



**For research, resources, and more:
www.ats.edu**

ats The Association of Theological Schools
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ATS Data Sources

- Annual Report Data
- Student Questionnaires
- Educational Models and Practices: Mapping the Workforce Survey
- Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers: School's Annual Reports and Data Charts