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Editor's Introduction

Nancy Merrill
Managing Editor

This issue of the journal shares with readers the summary reports of two Lilly Endowment programs that, together, involved ninety-three member schools of the Association and the Commission. The reports were issued and a forum held in Indianapolis in January 2005 to share, discuss, and celebrate the work of the schools that participated in the two programs. The summary reports are reprinted here to provide a wider audience for the findings and to engage the imagination of all who work in and care about theological education.

The first report, written by Carol E. Lytch, describes "the experiment" of the Endowment's Theological Programs for High School Youth, undertaken by forty-eight theological schools beginning in 1999. Then coordinator of Lilly Endowment Programs for Strengthening Congregational Leadership (and currently assistant executive director of ATS), Lytch provides an overview of the range of programs developed by the schools, how the goals of the program were addressed (to engage high school students in theological learning and inquiry and to encourage them to consider Christian ministry as a vocation), indicators of success, and the role of theological schools in effecting change and identifying and recruiting future leaders for the churches.

Malcolm Warford of Lexington Theological Seminary responds to Lytch's report by reflecting on youth as a time of searching questions about what really matters and his own experiences in youth ministry as a young person and as a pastor.

The second report in this volume by Kathleen A. Cahalan describes the Lilly Endowment program for Strengthening Congregational Ministry: A Program to Enhance Theological Schools' Capacities to Prepare Congregational Leadership. Conducted from 1999–2003, the program awarded grants to forty-five theological schools that enabled them to undertake projects for strengthening the Christian ministry by better preparing future pastors and priests. Cahalan reports on the efforts of some schools to enhance their curricula, the work of others to address infrastructure needs, advances in student recruitment, technology, and continuing education programs. She notes, "I hope my summary and analysis give due credit to the enormous commitment, hard work, and courage to risk and experiment that are part of the story of these schools."

Jonathan P. Strandjord of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America discusses the import of the capacity-building grant projects and what he considers to be "the very considerable implications of this report for the work, identity, and vocation of theological schools." He offers eight observations on the agency of

theological schools to effect change and to interrelate more significantly with church bodies and other partners as "learning communities of peers."

In the Open Forum section of this issue, Francis A. Lonsway, retired ATS director of student information resources, shares differences and similarities in expectations for beginning clergy among seventeen denominational families. The data were gathered via a 330-item survey conducted as part of the Profiles of Ministry program, which began as Readiness for Ministry in 1973. The 2003 survey provided an unprecedented thirty-year comparison of the attitudes of clergy and lay persons regarding the characteristics most needed by those beginning professional ministry.

Introduction

Carol E. Lytch

"I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly."
(John 10:10)

What would you do if someone gave you "risk money" to try a bold new strategy for advancing theological learning and vocations in church ministry? Essentially that is what Lilly Endowment offered all accredited theological schools in Canada and the United States in March 1998, when it invited them to submit proposals in two grant competitions: (1) Theological Programs for High School Youth, and (2) A Program to Enhance Theological Schools' Capacities to Prepare Congregational Leadership.[1] Theological schools were asked to turn their dreams into fundable proposals serving the common aim of the two grant programs: strengthening congregational leadership.

Lilly Endowment is dedicated to this aim. The mission of the Religion Division is to deepen and enrich the religious life of American Christians, primarily by helping strengthen Christian churches. Calling, training, and supporting leaders for Christian congregations is at the heart of their vocation.

In the years since 1998, theological schools have been busy breathing life into their proposals. In many cases, hopes have been realized and exceeded. In a few cases, parts of some projects proved unworkable. With the opportunity to revise plans on the basis of formative evaluation, other strategies were adopted. In all, a great deal was learned—the most important indicator of success.

Theological schools have shared their lessons in different ways with colleagues and constituents. In these reports, Kathleen A. Cahalan, associate professor of practical theology at St. John's University School of Theology–Seminary, and I take a look across the programs in each stream of grant making to highlight valuable lessons that can benefit a wide audience of educators, pastors, and other leaders in American religious life who are devoted to the common task of strengthening leadership for the church.

These reports are presented in developmental sequence. In the first, I summarize the efforts by theological schools to reach out to high school youth and offer them a taste of the excitement of theological inquiry and a vision for ministry. This report tells the stories of a bold experiment that shows promise for identifying young people with spiritual, intellectual, and social gifts for church leadership. Next, Kathleen Cahalan summarizes the strategic and imaginative efforts of theological schools to train ministry students and sustain pastoral leaders in their work. She tells a rich, nuanced story that includes the fortification or rediscovery of interdependence between seminary and congregation. There are themes common to both reports, including the critical importance of theological schools working with a wide circle of partners.

It has been my privilege to serve as the coordinator for both streams of grant making since 1999. On behalf of all the grantees who tell me often to thank Lilly Endowment for its grants and for the peer learning opportunities that accompanied them, I express deep gratitude to Lilly Endowment Vice

President for Religion, Craig Dykstra, for his extraordinary vision. I thank the program officers who lead the work in these two streams of grant making: Christopher Coble in Theological Programs for High School Youth, and Fredrick Hofheinz (through 2002) and John Wimmer (beginning in 2002) in A Program to Enhance Theological Schools' Capacities to Prepare Congregational Leadership. Having worked with Lilly Endowment officers, I know that they deserve recognition for conceiving new possibilities for theological education in service to the church. They conscientiously advise and tirelessly support the work of grantees. They laud their successes and attend to the lessons of each project. Kathleen Cahalan, Elizabeth Lynn, and Susie Quern Pratt, in their work in the Division of Religion in the area of evaluation, have contributed immeasurably to the work of these grants and to the coordination—especially Kathleen who has been an architect of and collaborator in the coordination work.

The Fund for Theological Education (FTE) has been the right institutional home and partner for the coordination so that the work of the grants can be joined with FTE's work as a leading advocate for excellence and diversity in Christian ministry and scholarship—nurturing and supporting the next generation of leaders for the church. I thank James Waits, president of FTE through 2003; Ann Svennungsen, president of FTE beginning in 2004; Melissa Wiginton, FTE director of Partnership for Excellence and Ministry Programs; and the entire staff for sharing in this endeavor.

Louisville Presbyterian Seminary has offered me its gracious hospitality, not just as the local address for the coordination, but also in its Christian fellowship and collegiality. I thank my staff, Nancy Fuller, meeting planner and secretary through 2004; Angela Cowser, meeting planner 2004–2005; and Jan Scarbrough, administrative secretary 2004–2005 for getting the work done as a ministry.

I also thank a group of colleagues who led annual peer learning groups with me as facilitators: Kathleen Cahalan, Larry Kent Graham, K. Brynolf Lyon, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, Paul Philibert, Don Richter, and especially Victor Klimoski—facilitator trainer. As grantees met to share resources, articulate lessons, and hold one another accountable for this new work, these facilitators made this learning opportunity productive and enjoyable.

Finally, I thank the seminary presidents, deans, project directors, faculty members, administrators, trustees, church and denominational leaders, pastors, theological students, teens, and others I have had the privilege to come to know through the seventy-three theological schools with these grants. It is your work we lift up in these reports.

Abundant life is the theme of the 2005 Forum where these reports are presented. "I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly," said our Lord. The life-giving presence of God is evident in the faithful stewardship of these theological schools, Lilly Endowment, and their partners. We celebrate and honor this work in these reports.

ENDNOTE

1. See Summary Report I Appendix C for the Request for Proposals mailed to theological schools on March 19, 1998.

Summary Report I
Strategic Advances in Theological Education: Theological Programs for High School Youth, 1999–2004

Carol E. Lytch
The Fund for Theological Education, Inc.

We can take it for granted that high school senior Nathan Jones has been formed in the Christian faith. As the son of Duke University Divinity School Dean, L. Gregory Jones, and The Rev. Susan Pendleton Jones, how could he not be? All the same, even Nathan's father was impressed that Nathan would critique the ideology printed on a T-shirt he was given to wear at Governor's School, "Accept Nothing . . . Question Everything." Nathan argued, "Those sayings are just wrong. . . . They are not what I believe." The parents affirm their son's insight and, ironically, questioning stance. As the father explains,

> Our conversation took us back to the previous summer, when Nathan had attended the Duke Youth Academy for Christian Formation. He had found that to be a wonderful, life-giving experience that enabled him to claim Christian faith for himself in powerful ways. . . . He spent the next month reading Deitrich Bonhoeffer, Augustine, Barbara Brown Taylor, Roberta Bondi, and other Christian writers to whom he had been exposed. He also bought a T-shirt that became one of his favorite shirts to wear to high school. It is black, with bold white letters that say "loser." On the back are Jesus' words: "Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."[1]

The father marvels at the boldness of his son. He continues,

> Our son had discovered that there is something more important than self-interest, or even a posture of relentless criticism and questioning. He had discovered a call to a way of life that invites and requires commitment. His "loser" T-shirt led him to articulate that discovery.[2]

Questioning and exploring a call are two things young people are encouraged to do by theological seminaries these days. It is a fairly new opportunity.

In January 2005, six years will have elapsed since Lilly Endowment awarded grants in an initiative called "Theological Programs for High School Youth." Twelve years will have passed since the first seminary-sponsored program for high school youth was launched. In the intervening years, fifty theo-

logical schools directly engaged a population they normally do not reach: high school youth.

I was asked by the Religion Division of Lilly Endowment to capture what we have learned from this initiative and to share our lessons with an audience of theological educators attending the January 27–29, 2005, Forum. While many in this audience are grantees themselves, others attending want to understand the experience of these innovators and the implications of this new work for the future of theological education and the church.

Material for this report was gleaned from my interaction with grantees through the activities of the coordination program I direct for them. I convene peer learning groups of grantees and an annual Forum that includes presentations and discussions of themes related to theological education. I read annual program reports of the projects and make visits to a sample of the programs.

In the first section of this report, I outline the contours of "The Experiment," the different rounds of grant making, the range of program designs, staffing patterns, partnerships, other structural features of the programs, and the spectrum of theological thought represented by the grantees. In the second section, I review the goals of the initiative and describe how theological schools frame and approach those goals pedagogically and programmatically in ways that are appropriate to their theological traditions and cultures. Here I highlight some best practices and obstacles to attaining those goals, and conclude with a discussion of the impact of these projects on various constituencies. In a third section, I ask, "What undergirds success?" What factors across the programs tend to predict that they will be continued at the end of the grant period? Fourth, I explore what has been learned about youth, what deepens their theological understandings and practices of the Christian faith, what assists them in exploring their Christian vocation—and the possibility of a church vocation in particular. Finally, I discuss theological schools as agents of change for the sake of the church.

The experiment

The Theological Programs for High School Youth initiative has been called an experiment. The idea of seminaries hosting programs for high school youth had never been tried on a national scale in the United States and Canada. Lilly Endowment stated the rationale and need for this new work as follows:

> Who will be the next generation of Christian pastors? Who will lead the church in the next millennium? When and how will young people be recruited, called, and trained? Religious leaders from a wide range of denominations are asking these perennial questions today with a renewed urgency. The answers are not clear.
>
> Many congregational and denominational youth fellowship programs nurture young people in the Christian faith and establish personal relationships with other Christians. They do not always provide adequate opportunities for youth

> to explore and examine critically the long and rich tradition of Christian thought and practice. At the same time, church leaders worry that the networks and systems needed to identify and recruit talented young people into the vocation of Christian ministry are not strong enough at the present time.
>
> How can churches encourage bright youth to consider their vocational choices and life commitments in the light of Christian theological understanding? And how can they call talented young people into the Christian ministry? Lilly Endowment believes that theological schools can play a critical role in addressing this question.[3]

The Endowment wisely piloted this idea at one theological school, Candler School of Theology at Emory University, with the founding of the Youth Theology Institute in 1993.[4] It demonstrated that:

> High school aged young people are capable of asking deeply penetrating theological questions and long for opportunities to engage in sustained theological discussion about serious personal and social issues. These opportunities excite and stimulate their imaginations. Not surprisingly, many youth, as a result, have shifted their career focus and are beginning to pursue a vocation in Christian ministry. By creating theological programs for youth, theological schools are in a unique position to help youth and strengthen the future church.[5]

Thus this experiment was not a shot in the dark. Rather, Lilly Endowment had grounds for believing that starting a variety of Theological Programs for High School Youth at theological schools across the United States and Canada would test other models for these programs and multiply the good outcomes for other church traditions in other parts of North America.

The first round of grants. All accredited theological schools in The Association of Theological Schools were invited to submit proposals in the spring of 1998 on a "fast track" or "slow track" basis. Twelve fast-track grant proposals were selected and awarded grants in October 1998. Others submitted a planning proposal and took an additional year to develop an implementation proposal. Eleven who opted for the slower path were awarded implementation grants in 1999, including one proposal submitted jointly by Bethel Seminary of Bethel University and Luther Seminary. Implementation grants ranged from $40,000 to $1,200,000. (See Appendix A for a list of grantees.)

As an experiment, a "wait-and-see" plan of action prevailed. Careful attention was paid to the progress of these twenty-four schools. When it became apparent that the three-year grant period was not going to be long enough for theological schools to both launch a new program and make it sustainable, Lilly Endowment offered schools the opportunity to renew the grant for an additional three-year period at half the level of funding. All but one school applied for renewal.[6] Twenty-two renewal grants were awarded in October 2001.

The second round of grants. When early indicators showed that the new programs were achieving hoped-for outcomes, a second round of theological schools was added. The second Request for Proposals emphasized the value of establishing partnerships with other institutions to do this work and stated more directly the hope that young people would be exposed to the idea of pursuing a church vocation. Eight theological schools were awarded "fast track" four-year grants in October 2001. Sixteen others followed the slower two-step process, and began their four-year grant period in July 2002. One of the slow track theological schools, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, proposed to combine efforts with the existing program at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Grants in the second round ranged from $600,000 to $2,000,000.

Sustainability grants. It appeared that even with renewal grants for the first round grantees and a longer grant period for the second round grantees, these programs still needed additional help to have a reasonable chance of continuing beyond the period of the grant. Lilly Endowment offered schools a sustainability grant of $100,000 or $150,000, depending on the size of their program. All forty-five of the continuing programs requested and received this grant in 2003.

Summary. The total number of theological schools in Theological Programs for High School Youth is forty-eight. The total number of *programs*[7] currently funded in this initiative is forty-five. Adding two other seminary-sponsored programs for high school youth that Lilly Endowment funded in separate grant making—at Candler School of Theology and Claremont School of Theology—*the grand total of programs currently funded comes to forty-seven.* The total amount of funding awarded by Lilly Endowment for the first and second round planning and implementation grants, renewal grants, sustainability grants, and for programs at Candler and Claremont[8] is $66,063,713.

Project designs

Lilly Endowment gave theological schools free reign to create programmatic designs that achieve the twin goals of the initiative: "(1) stimulate and nurture an excitement about theological learning and inquiry, and (2) identify and encourage a new generation of young Christians to consider vocations in Christian ministry." The forty-six projects did, in fact, come up with forty-six different ways to accomplish these goals.[9] Each design has its own logic that makes it impossible to reduce the programs to a handful of standard models. These unique designs, however, use some of the same components to achieve their goals.

One component, the *Christian residential community*, asks youth to leave home and experience immersion in a Christian community of learning and/or service. In most cases, youth are brought to the seminary's campus to experience life in that setting; however, in some cases they are hosted at colleges, camps, and retreat centers. Some programs divide the time spent on campus with time in other settings. The immersion in Christian community can occur as part of a wilderness trek, mission trip, pilgrimage to religious sites, camp counselor-in-training program, or time spent at a national denominational meeting.

The duration of this residential experience is on average two weeks, but it can be as long as a month. The experience lasts one week or longer in eighty-seven percent of the programs. Roughly half of the programs offer a sequence of residential experiences instead of just one. Most common is a two-week residential experience followed later in the year by a retreat or series of retreats to extend the formative impact of Christian community.

Many of the programs employ this core component because the Christian residential experience offers a "telescoped context . . . [that] makes possible focused overlapping intentionality, careful patterning, and thoughtful reflection,"[10] as Fred Edie of Duke University Divinity School explains. Most theological schools intentionally imbed this residential experience of Christian community in an understanding of the broader Christian community in which youth are formed. In the case of the Interdenominational Theological Center's program, for example, intensive immersion in Christian community is viewed as immersion in "the village," which includes the institutions of the home, congregation, and community. While young people spend four weeks living at a retreat center with their peers, periodically during the remainder of the year-long program they attend day-long convocations with their parents, pastors, civic community leaders, and others where they are formed as Christian disciples by the village.

Another notable component used by thirteen percent of the programs is the *youth-initiated project* executed in the home community or congregation after the residential experience. These projects ask youth to use the new learning and skills they gained and to experience themselves as church leaders. Often mentors supervise youth in their projects. At Perkins School of Theology Southern Methodist University, the mentored community service project is the primary component of the program design. The program begins with the initiation of a mentored community service project and ends with its public presentation. There is a significant residential experience in the middle, but it is aimed at preparing young people to execute their plans for the community service project, the key component of the learning strategy.

Another notable core component used by fifty-four percent of the programs is *structured follow-up with mentors* at the conclusion of the residential experience. A pastor or another church leader meets at regular intervals with the youth to reflect on the themes of the program, sometimes using materials provided by the project. In other cases it is the staff of the project who remain in touch with program alumnae and alumni, sometimes making visits to the youth at home or at college. Mentoring also may occur through extended email contact with the staff.

Some projects facilitated follow-up through a Web-based chat room and bulletin board. Several projects have state-of-the-art *Web sites* with daily prayer and study resources, commentary on films and books, and other resources for youth. (See Appendix A for list of Web sites.)

In addition, the *nomination process* itself can be considered a core component of 15 percent of the programs. While most programs accept applications from individuals who hear about the programs in a variety of ways, some programs require that youth be identified by their pastors or other church

leaders to participate. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, for example, establishes relationships first with pastors who then are invited to nominate youth from their congregations. Pastors single out youth who appear to have a calling to full-time service in the church. Through this kind of nomination process, a new awareness dawns upon the young person that he or she has recognizable gifts and aptitude for leadership for ministry. Various issues related to recruitment will be explored in greater depth in a section to follow.

Some programs offer *graduated levels of involvement* or "the funnel approach." Several hundred teens may participate in a weeklong conference. They are then eligible to apply to continue in a second more demanding program for a smaller number. Sometimes a third opportunity is offered; in Western Seminary's program, for example, the third opportunity is a mission trip to Nepal offered to just a few who have declared themselves for full-time service in the church. Other programs design *multiple points of engagement* with youth, but they are not necessarily funneling the same youth through graduated levels of engagement. Rather, separate programs are offered to youth at different developmental stages. For example, the Lutheran theological seminaries in Gettysburg and Philadelphia (jointly) and Lancaster Theological Seminary host programs for confirmation students in the eighth or ninth grade and for youth in each grade of their high school years.

Classroom-based learning offers youth an opportunity to take a course or daylong seminar on the seminary campus. St. Mary's Seminary and University offers high school juniors a college credit course in the foundational themes of Catholic theology and sponsors one-day interfaith forums for teams of youth and teachers from area high schools. Newman Theological College brings area youth from high schools to the campus for one-day workshops to explore theological reflection on a variety of topics. This is complemented by an optional weeklong residential summer school. The Urban Leadership Academy invites area youth to a community center to spend each day of a two-week period to engage in a variety of activities: Bible studies, presentations, stories of exemplary Christian leaders, arts exploration, and interactive activities.

Three of the theological schools developed a *transportable curriculum* to use with teens in multiple settings. Lincoln Christian Seminary developed a series of CD-ROM teaching modules that are used in large gatherings of teens at events hosted by national youth organizations. Eden Theological Seminary created a retreat weekend curriculum around the theme of vocation involving drama, music, Bible study, dance, film, Web site design, and youth-led worship. The leaders, professors, musicians, and actors took the show on the road to each of the twenty-four conferences of the United Church of Christ. Saint Francis Seminary involved youth in the design of three curriculum modules (on youth ministry, peaceful conflict resolution, and youth-friendly liturgy) that they produced in video format for youth to use as they teach the curriculum in their own parishes.

While youth are the primary focus of Theological Programs for High School Youth, some projects also serve adults who are closely connected with teens. Some projects ask teams of youth and adults to attend the program together.

In this case, the adults may participate alongside the youth in all activities so they return home with the same experience to share their learning in their parish. For example, at Saint Meinrad School of Theology youth-adult teams return home with a new vision of ministry founded in the Eucharist and are "seeds for growth in the life of the parish." In other cases, adults participate in a parallel program held simultaneously to offer training for youth ministers or continuing education for high school religion teachers. For example, St. John's offers masters degree and certificate program options to the adult mentor who takes classes while two teens from the parish participate in the summer program for teens. Other projects offer adults workshops and degree programs in youth ministry on separate occasions. Many of these programs afford seminarians and college students who staff the programs hands-on experience or a "learning lab" in youth ministry. Pastors and other church leaders, as well as parents, are sometimes offered learning opportunities through the projects.

Organizing themes

These programs are decidedly more than the sum of their parts. The structure of the program flows from the logic of a theme that organizes the curriculum. These themes reflect the particular theology, culture, and resources of the schools. Three examples will illustrate.

The theme of interfaith dialogue is a natural emphasis for St. Mary's Seminary and University, as the oldest Catholic seminary in the United States, founded in the colony of Maryland, distinguished by its principle of religious toleration. The St. Mary's program offers high school juniors a college level course called Christian Foundations to ground them in their Catholic tradition. This preparation enables them to participate later in a Forum that brings together teens from area high schools for a day of interfaith dialogue.

The theme of *ordo*, an ecology of interrelated liturgical practices dating to the church of antiquity, shapes the curriculum of the Duke Youth Academy for Christian Formation. For two weeks, the daily lives of youth are patterned by prayer, worship, teaching, and ministry with attention to Christian ritual symbolic practices involving book (Scriptures), table (Eucharist), and bath (baptism). The academy forms students into Christian baptismal identity that has implications for their vocations in the church and the world.

The theme of peace building of Catholic Theological Union's Peacebuilding Initiative grows from the vision of the late Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, noted for his ardent and eloquent commitment to peace and reconciliation in a violent and conflict-ridden society. The program offers a yearlong series of educational and formational activities including an intensive weeklong summer seminar for understanding the relationship between Christian theological traditions and real-world practices of peace building, social justice, and reconciliation. As part of the summer seminar, students visit sites where this happens "on the ground" in urban settings. Daily morning and evening prayer and training in leadership skills round out the formation of the peacebuilder. During the school year the youth develop a hands-on project to advance peacebuilding and reconciliation in their schools, parishes, or communities. They return to the seminary twice for follow-up retreats to reflect on their efforts.

Staffing patterns

The staffing pattern is a key variation in the program designs represented by these forty-eight programs.[11] In most cases, the seminary hired a new person to direct the program, and, depending on the scale of the project, various assistant project directors, coordinators, and administrative staff. The director usually holds a PhD or a Masters degree in a theological field of study. Many are professors and scholars in the area of Christian education, a background that serves the project well and allows them to parlay lessons from the project into their scholarship. Some are directors of admissions at the seminary, a role that also goes well with the follow-up process at the conclusion of the program. Admissions Director/Project Director Ellie Johns of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary has visited 63 percent of the alumnae and alumni of her high school program in the course of recruiting on college campuses for the seminary. As it will be seen in later sections of this report, how the director is connected to the institution—integrally or tangentially—appears to affect the degree to which the project is owned by the seminary and, therefore, its likelihood of continuation.

There is an even wider range of variation exhibited in arrangements for *who teaches* in the program. Some programs use seminary faculty exclusively. Others use no seminary faculty, but instead rely on pastors and youth ministers who are experienced working with youth. In most cases, there is a blend of various kinds of teachers employed by the projects, including not just seminary professors, pastors, and youth ministers, but also college professors, doctoral students, seminarians, and social service professionals.

Because one of the aims of the project is vocational exploration, persons from a variety of vocations are often invited to come and tell youth about their vocation. A few programs have included some guest celebrities such as Mr. Rogers, Desmond Tutu, nationally known song writer-composers, professionals in the Hollywood film industry, and Holocaust survivors. Some programs arrange internships or "shadowing" experiences with people in a variety of church careers, including pastors, chaplains, deaconesses, missionaries, parish nurses, and lay ecclesial ministers.

Institutional and constituent partnerships

Partnerships are a key structural element of the designs and they vary in type. As mentioned above, some seminaries partner with each other to sponsor these programs. Some partner with colleges and universities.[12] Some partner with youth organizations.[13] Schools, public and church-related, are key partners for some projects.[14] Community-based organizations and local social service agencies are crucial for assisting theological schools in their work on mission projects and immersion in other cultures. Denominations, church agencies, and religious communities provide a variety of assistance for recruitment of students, overseas travel, wilderness treks, and internships. Sometimes they give financial support. International organizations facilitate travel and virtual global dialogue through satellite technology. Camps are integrated into the work of some of the programs. Partnerships are developed with particular congregations as program participants and as financial supporters.

Networks of youth ministers are crucial to recruitment and to the youth ministry programs sometimes offered in conjunction with these programs. Seminary alumnae and alumni sometimes help recruit students as they read about programs in the seminary's publications. Publishers produce curriculum materials and books for the programs.

The notion of partnership is expanded a bit further by two programs that have established themselves as independent, faith-based, not-for-profit 501(3)c organizations. The Urban Leadership Academy is jointly owned by three entities, its two sponsoring seminaries, Bethel and Luther, and a grass roots urban non-profit organization. DEPTH is jointly owned by its sponsoring seminary, Chicago Theological Seminary, as well as individuals from four area congregations representing four different denominations. The decision to establish these legal partnerships gives the programs a more independent profile in the community that they hope to parlay into fund-raising advantages.

Research

While all projects evaluate the impact of the program on young participants, some projects,[15] in addition, conduct research on the impact of various learning strategies on the young persons' identities and approaches to vocation. Some projects broaden the scope of their investigation to understandings of youth in the general population, including the competing ideologies and influences that affect the transmission of Christian faith in these times. Some project directors, such as Steven Patty of Multnomah and Chapman Clark of Fuller, have incorporated new understandings of youth gleaned through these projects into publications. (See Appendix B for a list of publications.)

The spectrum of theological thought

Despite similarities in the basic goals and structure of the projects, there were fundamental theological and cultural differences that set grantees apart as they provide Theological Programs for High School Youth. This became most apparent to us as theological schools met in peer groups of five to six schools over a three-year period to offer one another support, accountability, and mutual learning. We discovered that schools read different literature on youth ministry and cite different authorities and theoretical resources to explain patterns of religious life in American teens. They rely on different publishers and music companies for their materials. The content of the curriculum they design for youth includes different authors and texts. In peer group discussions, we bumped up against different assumptions about young people and their relationship to adults. Are they equal? If so, in what way? We occasionally felt tension as we gathered to worship because deeply cherished values about worship, its elements and its leadership, are not held in common. These different understandings about worship yielded different patterns of worship in the various Theological Programs for High School Youth projects as well.

The schools' ties to specific denominations and traditions can explain some of this difference. There are the expected affinities among Catholics, among Evangelicals, and among mainline Protestants. For example, some

traditions understand religion's primary goal to be the individual's salvation through religious and moral discipline; others place high spiritual value on reformist engagement with the state and society. Many of the characteristics noted by Carroll, Wheeler, Aleshire, and Marler[16] differentiating evangelical and mainline Protestant seminaries describe well the approaches of schools in this initiative.

In general, however, it is not helpful to place schools in categories or attach labels. Lilly Endowment selected schools without regard to where they might fall on a conservative-to-liberal spectrum. What made a proposal compelling for funding was the consistency in the goals, design, and pedagogy of proposal with the theological orientation and commitments of the theological school.

Hopes fulfilled?

All projects address the twin goals of the initiative from distinct understandings of what constitutes theological learning and inquiry and how God's call is awakened. While the programs utilize some of the same components and share structural similarities, they choose from the repertoire of Christian symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views those elements that resonate with their traditions to frame these goals in ways that are consonant with their traditions.[17]

Some theological schools viewed the task of stimulating and nurturing excitement about theological learning and inquiry as awakening a hunger to understand God's plan for the world and the redemption of human life. In Protestant terms, having received salvation by grace through faith, they strive to live by the discipline of a biblical Christian faith. In Catholic terms, they seek to grow into the sacramental mystery of Christ's presence in the world through the liturgy of the church.

Thus students in Theological Programs for High School Youth are taught the tools of the Christian life, especially the study of Scripture and (in Catholic programs) the liturgy. With knowledgeable theologians and exemplary pastors in their midst, youth ask difficult questions about the dissonance they live with as Christ-centered people in a humanistic, consumerist, and secular world.

In addition, schools viewed the task of stimulating and nurturing excitement about theological learning and inquiry as raising consciousness of God's intention for justice and inclusion to reign in the world. God's redeeming grace becomes available as prejudices are changed and unjust structures are replaced with ones that offer equal access to opportunities and resources to live into *shalom*. God's reign is evident as hierarchies are dismantled; even—in some cases—the difference between adults as "experts" and youth as "learners."

All schools used multiple learning strategies to achieve theological learning (goal #1). The difference among schools was greater in their approach to the exploration of Christian vocation (goal #2). While all presented the call to Christian vocation in a broad sense, some also focused on a call to a church vocation.

Goal #1: Theological learning and inquiry

Multnomah Bible College and Biblical Seminary reported in 2003:

> We have been exposing students to a high caliber of theological instruction from college and seminary professors. For many, this is the first time in their lives when they can ask any question they desire and probe as deeply as they want into the intricacies of the faith. This has awakened theological hunger in the hearts of many. The students read from the classics as well as current theological authors. They are asked to write discourses of response. At the conclusion of the session, they end up teaching their peers the theology they have learned. The objective of the program is to immerse them in theology in order to give them a vision for a life of theological inquiry.

As a visitor to Multnomah's Credo program in 2000, I witnessed the "theological hunger" that the report describes. My notes from that visit report:

> We had two two-hour lectures on Christology the next day. A professor, Dr. Harper, delivered them in a very interactive, personable style. Teens soaked it up. They asked questions and sought him out between lectures for further conversation.

While religious instruction was certainly a key approach, as illustrated in the lecture strategy above, it was complemented by other approaches. This variety is evident in Multnomah's 2003 curriculum. A two-week session included (1) lectures by professors on the following topics: Apostles' Creed, Structure of Evil, Hermeneutics, Philippians, Glory of God, and Apologetics; (2) a three-day "experiential education wherein students explored their own affect and the development of their own souls" through physical challenges in a wilderness trek and high ropes course, debriefing, solitude in a six-hour solo experience in the woods, and readings; and (3) a retreat that the students led for their peers in a rural church setting.

Not only did all schools adopt multiple pedagogical strategies to achieve this goal, all encouraged youth to ask questions. In some cases, youth not only asked questions, they were called "scholars" and were encouraged to think of themselves as theologians and leaders of the church.

John Hoffmeyer, professor of theology at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia describes a course taught to teens as part of their program as follows.

> Question and response frame the course like bookends. But the responses are not "the answer" from an outside authority. They are the scholars' responses to their own questions. Of course in the open discussion on the final two days scholars

> add their reflections to each others' responses, so the individual process of question and response opens to breathe on the broader group space.[18]

One of the ways these Theological Programs for High School Youth affirm God's justice and inclusion is by gearing their programs for particular groups that have been underrepresented and under resourced in society and the church. Three examples are as follows:

- Pacific School of Religion's program, Represent to Witness (R2W), offers a program for Asian and Pacific Islander Youth with "a deeply-held sensitivity to and respect for emergent cultures."
- Interdenominational Theological Center, Youth Hope-Builder's Academy "centers on the point that a pedagogy of hope is needed in the religious education of Black persons that brings about a new or renewed awareness and embrace of God's value of Black personhood."
- Perkins School of Theology invites "young people on the margins," specifically "those youth who experience pressure in their lives due to their racial minority status, their socio-economic background, and other high pressure environments to reflect on their concerns about God."

As a group, these youth wrestle with their identity as Christians of a particular race, ethnicity, or class, and explore the legacy of injustice and current discrimination they face. Through this process they are empowered become "bold and faith-filled leaders engaged in ministries of compassion and justice," says Fumitaka Matsuoka, professor of theology at Pacific School of Religion.

Thus, students critically analyze traditional understandings of race, gender, and class and confront their own hidden prejudices. They are encouraged to encounter the pluralism of the world through interfaith dialogue. They expose the sinfulness of the church's complicity with injustice. They learn the skills of community organizing to make justice a more present reality.

As a visitor to Pacific School of Religion's R2W program in 2003, I happened to arrive on the day when the theme was community organizing. I observed a session where Asian and Pacific Islander American students were taught to analyze the political, historical, social, and economic elements of a situation. They used this framework to analyze their visit on the previous day to a Cambodian neighborhood in Oak Park where they witnessed poverty. Most of the youth in the program were middle class, except for one who said he identified with the poverty. Some had relatives living in neighborhoods like that. Another session followed on the theme of justice and social change. My notes on the second session include the following excerpt:

> They reviewed a "power chart," which lists social characteristics in two columns, "the haves," and "the have nots." . . . It was interesting that God was put in the "have" category . . . The question came up: where does injustice come from? The

> answer from the class was: God is the ultimate power who made people. People create categories that put some in the "have" and "have not" places. Faith comes in when you believe you can change those categories to be more just. Ginny read to the class Isaiah 58:8 and I Timothy 4:12.

A discussion followed about important Supreme Court decisions that affected Asians and Pacific Islanders. Students discussed the reparations given to Japanese Americans in the 1980s for internment during WWII.

Theological learning and inquiry were geared toward giving teens skills in critical analysis of Bible as well as culture. Jeffrey Kwan, professor of Hebrew Bible at Pacific School of Religion, said he emphasized to the teens that they could ask questions of the biblical text. He noted that this was not a style of Bible study familiar to many of the teens as they entered the program. Similarly, the Gordon-Conwell program taught an inductive style of Bible study that was new to many of the youth.

> David Horn presented the inductive Bible study. He asked them to work individually to write questions in their journals about a passage in the Gospel of Mark about Jesus' baptism and temptation. They were to write their own "who, what, when, where, and why" questions about the passage.
>
> After about thirty minutes of individual work, David asked them what questions the passage had raised for them. The conversation was very dynamic. They raised good questions: Was there one baptism or two? What was John's baptism for? Why the mention of the wild animals? Did a dove descend or was it just like a dove? Why did Jesus have to be tempted if he was God? David did not give them the answers. He just let them ponder the questions and accepted the openness of it. He referred to Mark as the author and talked about what Mark emphasized in his Gospel as an author as compared to the other Gospel writers.
>
> Later I asked some kids about the inductive style of studying the Bible. They said it was new to them. One said she did not like it at first, but she got used to it. All the teens I talked to said they intended to continue this on their own after they got home.

Overall, the strategies used by the forty-eight programs for stimulating and nurturing excitement about theological learning and inquiry are too numerous to mention. These approaches hardly involved just reading classic and contemporary theological texts, studying the Bible, listening to lectures, and participating in class discussions. Some of the other complementary learning strategies that assisted in a crucial way include—but are not limited to—the following:

- Building a learning community where relationships develop over time and with authenticity that comes through living in close proximity and working out differences.
- Involving youth in developing and leading worship services, especially as they relate to themes of the curriculum.
- Using drama to allow youth to link the Christian story with the truths of their own lives and to practice and perform drama for others. This is the primary focus of the new program at Claremont School of Theology.
- Using music and the arts to express verbal and nonverbal symbols of theology; enabling creativity as an imitation of God's creative activity.
- Telling biblical stories from memory as performance and a means to internalize them.
- Journaling for reflection in response to themes and events of the program, both written journals and video footage.
- Small group time, especially over meals (named at Gordon-Conwell "Table Talk," for Luther's practice) or late at night when *communitas*[19] is shared in darkness (called "Sacred Candle" at Wartburg).
- Taking wilderness excursions and climbing high ropes courses, especially when physical limits are pushed. Risk-taking becomes a metaphor for taking the leap of faith.
- Visiting sacred sites of Christian history as pilgrims.
- Encountering "the Other,"[20] those of a race, class, ethnicity, or nationality not met in the student's every day life. This may occur in neighborhood visits, overseas travel, and visits to non-Christian houses of worship,
- Offering youth an opportunity to teach or to give testimony.
- Offering an opportunity to serve through physical labor, followed by reflection on the meaning of that service.
- Learning practices of prayer, meditation, walking the labyrinth, reflection on the Scriptures (especially Lectio Divina), the Litany of the Hours, and other historic and contemporary Christian spiritual practices.
- Offering free time with various options for rest and unstructured play and conversation. Keeping the Sabbath.

These strategies often served both goals of the programs, and more will be mentioned in the section on the second goal to follow.

Goal #2: Encouragement of vocations in Christian ministry

The theological schools vary in their understandings of how to encourage young people to explore vocations in Christian ministry. For some schools, this second goal of the project, raising up a new generation of leaders for the church, is its *raison d'etre*. Their denominations and church traditions are deeply concerned about the lack of talented young people stepping forward to serve their churches as pastors, priests, and trained professionals in other

church leadership roles. They are eager to see results from these programs.[21] Some Theological Programs for High School Youth take on this task in a very direct way.

Learning strategies for the more direct church vocations approach include—but are not limited to—the following:

- Vocational exploration retreats offering information about the variety of church vocations and how to pursue them, combined with inspirational worship.
- Call stories told by people in church vocations.
- A chance to sample the life of a seminarian by living in the dorm, taking the full range of courses a seminarian takes, and attending chapel following the schedule of a seminarian.
- Exposure to others who are identified as having an aptitude for church leadership and an interest in exploring a church vocation. Discovering "I am not alone."
- Shadowing church professionals in their places of work.
- Tours of church related colleges that serve as feeder schools to the seminary.
- Personality inventories that indicate where the individual's gifts and temperament coincide with those in professional ministry.
- Mentors who assist the young person to wrestle with their call as it strengthens or changes over time.

Some schools, especially those in the Baptist and Mennonite traditions, recognize the congregation as the key agent of the call. "This program begins and ends with the local church," reports Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary. The seminary not only provides a program, it seeks to empower congregations to invite people into ministry with intentionality. One seminary president reports that he is starting to receive more invitations from congregations to come and speak to young people about ministry. Some programs ask congregations to publicly recognize young persons attending their program in a commissioning service.

All programs, whether they are direct in their presentation of a church vocation or not, explore the concept of vocation in broad theological terms, especially through the understanding that baptism commissions every Christian for ministry. All programs affirm the value of different types of callings and some include opportunities to explore professional fields outside the church. However, some schools prefer to keep the discussion about vocation in these broad terms. They believe that even if some of the youth someday become pastors and church professionals, first one must develop them as disciples. They focus on developing maturity in faith through learning spiritual practices, discovering skills in leadership and awakening a passion for justice in the world. A call to a church vocation, according to this view, flows naturally from the experiences that mature faith and engages young people in serious theological inquiry. Just being on a seminary campus exposes them to professors and seminarians and plants the seed of a church vocation in those who

are called to pursue it. If a young person is inclined to follow another path of Christian service, for example, teaching, social work, or public leadership, that is celebrated just as much.

Iliff School of Theology's program exemplifies the broad approach. It states the mission of FaithTrek as follows: "to create a context in which high school youth may discover their Christian vocation either as lay or ordained leaders in the church and community." Just one of the five goals of the program is "to help youth discover a sense of vocation." The activities of the programs designed to meet all five goals are (1) deep, structured ecumenical dialogue that crosses ethnic and socioeconomic lines; (2) conversations with theologians and religious spiritual elders; (3) activities that foster personal theological reflection and faith-making; and (4) contributing through responsible action to other FaithTrek participants, one's home church, and the community at large. While there is no shadowing of church professionals or presentation of church vocations, there is discussion about discerning gifts for ministry, exposure to ministry sites, participation in service learning, and development of mentored projects using methods of critical reflection and inquiry learned during the summer program.

All these theological schools, whether they utilize the direct church vocations approach or employ exclusively the broad approach, work in intentional ways to awaken youth to a call to Christian ministry. They also demonstrate a vital concern for cultivating a "culture of the call" in the wider systems of society. They partner with local churches, their denominations, colleges and universities, and others to define life's work as "a call," and not by the images of financial success, entrepreneurial ability, and/or entertainment value that dominate in North American culture.

Best practices and obstacles to achieving goals

Regardless of the variations noted in how goals are framed and addressed, some best practices and shared struggles to achieving project goals can be identified across theological schools. Looking at recruitment, contact time with teens, follow-up, and overall issues, I will review the successes and challenges that have been highlighted by project directors of Theological Programs for High School Youth.

Recruitment. One project director is well remembered for his address to an assembly of new project directors. He said, "'Build it and they will come' is a myth." By far, the greatest struggle project directors have experienced is recruitment. The issue is not a lack of interest on the part of young people, but an ability to convey the value of this experience to pastors, youth ministers, parents, and teachers who convey information to youth and hold sway over their choices. Some project directors have worked tirelessly and creatively to establish relationships with congregations, schools, regional judicatories, individual youth ministers, and their professional associations, camps, personnel at regional and national youth events and a host of others who influence youth. All say the most effective recruiters are the alumnae and alumni of the programs themselves who stir enthusiasm by word of mouth, albeit on a small scale.

Some who intentionally seek gender balance and diversity in their applicant pool work extra hard to target their efforts. Achieving gender balance among program participants is considered a desirable goal by most of the programs. Having an imbalance was named as a problem by 17 percent of the programs, as more females than males generally apply. Achieving a diversity of participants is also considered a desirable goal by most of the programs. For some, the goal focused on achieving racial and ethnic diversity. Others sought additional kinds of diversity, such as class, location (urban/rural/suburban), size of congregation, denomination or tradition, and fully able/disabled youth.

Project directors have greater ability to meet gender and diversity goals in the hiring of staff than they do to in enrolling youth participants. They can hand pick staff members; they are dependent on the general church population for their youth participants. The demographics of youth participants tend to mirror the mostly white middle class denominations of their base. Some recruit very intentionally from particular racial/ethnic congregations and denominational caucuses and still have mixed success. Other interesting findings about recruitment related to these concerns are as follows:

- Pacific School of Religion found ethnicity more complicated than expected, as there are important distinctions among those who might be labeled "Asian and Pacific Islander."
- Fuller Theological Seminary found that the dynamics of its group changed for the better when they reached the one-third mark in racial and ethnic diversity. They discovered that underrepresented minority youth more readily "found their voice."
- Chicago Theological Seminary brings together not individual youth, but youth groups. They mix youth groups from different demographic backgrounds to create diversity.

Some programs are partnered with large youth organizations that have access to an established network of youth. Programs with good partnerships tend to reach their enrollment goals. As mentioned above, the nomination process tends to yield good results because youth are honored to be chosen, and more schools are adopting this strategy.

Some interesting variations on recruitment are as follows:

- St. John's School of Theology–Seminary first recruits the adult mentor who then finds the two youth for the program.
- Haggard School of Theology of Azusa Pacific University uses its Web site and CD-ROMs as their recruiting tools. They do not produce paper brochures or send conventional mailings. Applications are received online.

Some programs offer "carrots" that attract a large number of youth to apply. Some of these are overseas travel, college credit, a stipend, and an oppor-

tunity to spend time in a desirable setting—a beach or a prestigious college campus, for example. Calvin Theological Seminary and St. Mary's Seminary and University, who discontinued their overseas travel to keep costs more manageable, have found that they are still attracting enough applicants because of the reputation and momentum they were able to establish early on.

Some schools have wrestled with how to respond appropriately to applicants they cannot accept. Calvin Theological Seminary offers alternative opportunities for those not accepted. They intentionally stopped selecting the students with just the best academic records and look instead for well-rounded youth for their program. Indeed, language about "the best and the brightest" for ministry has been redefined as these programs work with actual youth. Multiple intelligences, diversity of all kinds, spiritual maturity, and experience in church and community service are considered desirable qualities in applicants.

As more schools face sustainability issues, the cost-sharing approach is becoming more common. For example, churches, families, and the sponsoring theological school each pay one-third the cost. North American Baptist Seminary asks students to raise $1,000 for the overseas travel portion of their program. They find that congregations readily contribute, as this falls into the category of "a mission trip," a concept they understand. As schools begin to charge fees to cover at least some of the cost, they are seeing applicant pools decline or level off. Yet both Huron University College Faculty of Theology and Union Theological Seminary/Presbyterian School of Christian Education report that cost sharing actually improves the quality of students and/or their level of participation. They conclude that students tend to value that for which they pay.

The program during contact time with teens. This report would be incomplete without a comment about the power of the relationships and the learning community that is formed through these programs. As one program director put it, "the community is the text." It is the key source for learning. As Steven Patty of Multnomah put it,

> We have been struck with the power of an inquiring, worshipping, theologically oriented community. Many of our students reported experiencing a sense of acceptance, vulnerability, and depth more meaningful than they had ever experienced before. This experience gave them a sense for how church could be and a thirst for engaging in church in such a way that they could experience this kind of authenticity and community in their local parishes.

The quality of the community and the effectiveness of the curriculum are affected by the size of the group. A program appears to need a "critical mass." Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary reported that after they doubled their size to twenty-one participants, they noticed that teens were more receptive to the program because "interest in deep theological matters didn't make them strange or odd, but rather their questions and interests were common

and to be encouraged." They also reported that it is easier to handle a larger group because if there are a few challenging youth, there are more leaders in the pool to positively influence them and offer a helping hand.

Gathering the right teaching staff and counselors appears to be both a key reward and struggle for project directors. In some programs, project directors are deluged with requests from faculty and staff to participate. At Duke, two-thirds of the faculty and administration teach at the summer academy. At other schools, teaching slots are also highly coveted by the faculty. However, some report difficulty garnering faculty participation, especially from faculty who are not in the fields of Christian education or youth ministry. Teaching in these programs is generally not counted toward tenure. Some report that there is a "fear of youth" that keeps some faculty and other adults from attempting to teach youth or interact with them. The advantage to the program of including core faculty from various disciplines in the teaching of youth is that they become invested in the program and they are more likely to advocate its continuation. Also, the opportunity for youth to interact with distinguished scholars makes a profound and lasting impression on them.

Similarly, finding the right counselors to staff the programs can be challenging, especially for seminaries with small student bodies and no connection to a college. Project directors report that taking care to hire and train staff has paid off handsomely in the relationships those counselors build with the teens. One of the surprises of the first year of running a program is the lack of free time for leaders, their exhaustion over time, and the late hours that teens prefer. Getting plenty of assistance from those who have the stamina to handle this schedule, as well as adjusting the schedule to allow for more rest, are additional pearls of wisdom.

While few programs use shadowing as a strategy, it appears to be a very effective way to give young people a realistic picture of a person's professional role and allow them to hear a personal story of vocation. Schools that use this strategy report that youth said it clarified their sense of call. I believe that this learning strategy is underrated. A short-term, focused relationship with someone doing a particular work is an effective means for conveying the meaning and excitement of a call.

Twenty-four percent of the programs incorporate or originally planned to incorporate international trips or global partners into their curriculum. Some programs travel to Mexico, Central America, Romania, and to other parts of the world to experience immersion in another culture. Eastern Mennonite took its teens to an international meeting of Mennonites held in Zimbabwe. The Youth Hope-Builder's Academy of the Interdenominational Theological Center connected its students, by satellite, to youth in South Africa and Bermuda. Pacific Lutheran once enjoyed the presence of youth and a pastor from South Africa. While some seminaries have discontinued their international trip because of the cost or risk, Lancaster Theological Seminary maintains an ambitious schedule of trips and advocates for global travel that "widens theological horizons though exposure to the church in another part of the world, providing opportunities to join non-U.S. citizens in asking theological questions."[22]

Follow-up. Mentoring, an ancient Christian practice widely embraced by these programs, proved more difficult than expected to establish and maintain. In most cases, mentoring is a follow-up activity to the residential experience, and busy youth and adults have trouble making time for this regular contact (on average once a month) when they are removed from the focused environment of the residential experience. In most cases, youth choose their mentors from among persons in their congregation—their pastor or youth minister—so recruitment is not the issue. The training and screening of mentors proved more time-consuming than expected. Some programs require mentors to attend the closing ceremony of the residential program to gain a better understanding of the youth's experience. Some reported that the mentor relationship tended to feel superficial after the intensity of the on-campus program. Some programs provide guidelines and resource packets to help the mentor. Mentoring relationships are designed to last, on average, one year, but as long as four years at Gordon-Conwell. Another difficulty is dealing with the loss of a mentor in normal transitions out of the congregation. Some programs use as mentors college and graduate students who were staff in the on-campus program, and contact is by telephone or email instead of in person.

Over time, as program directors persevere in establishing this component, mentors are proving to be a critical component of many of the programs. Young people flourish with the care and attention of adults outside their families who continue the practices of theological reflection and Christian community learned in the on-campus program.

A few programs have inaugurated internships in congregations whereby youth are supervised in ministry by a pastoral mentor for the period of a month and develop their gifts for ministry in these settings. Internships may also take the form of a community study whereby youth learn to look at a community, analyze its needs, and design a ministry to meet those needs.

Web sites were found to be more difficult to launch than expected and not always productive for maintaining contact with youth. Web sites with interactive peer conversation need enough traffic to make them viable. Some Web sites that are frequently refreshed and monitored daily are highly successful.

Tracking participants over time is simple and enjoyable, that is, during the *first* year of the program. Over time, as the number of alumnae and alumni (happily) increases, project directors report that they are overwhelmed by the task of not just keeping in touch with them, but merely maintaining updated contact information on them. The Fund for Theological Education's office in Atlanta offers to maintain updated contact information on program participants and release that information to the theological school sponsoring its program upon request.

One of the best practices of the program is that of inviting alumnae and alumni to return as leaders in subsequent years. Approximately 26 percent of the programs invited former participants to be interns, assistants, proctors, researchers, mentors, speakers, audiovisual technicians, or fund raisers. A high percentage of those who return in leadership roles also pursue a church vocation.

Overall issues. A few of the programs executed the plan for their project as submitted to Lilly Endowment in their original proposal, but just a few of them. The vast majority of theological schools have made changes as they have proceeded. For example, programs added follow-up components such as reunions and mentors. They substituted ministry experiences in the United States and prayer retreats for international trips. Some gleaned ideas for improvements from their colleagues at peer group meetings or the Forum.

Wartburg Theological Seminary's program exemplifies the most dramatic change. After running a two-week on-campus summer residential program for three years, they realized that they were not getting the racial and ethnic diversity they desired. Furthermore, they were overtaxing their faculty resources, as many voluntarily spent long hours with the young people in and out of class. They redesigned the program to work more closely with two Lutheran camps, including one in Texas that serves Hispanic youth. Not entirely satisfied with the redesigned program, the following year, they reinvented themselves again—this time offering *three different programs:* one on campus, one both on campus and at the national youth gathering, and one connected with a Lutheran camp. What enabled this creative and energetic team to test these options was good formative evaluation.

Evaluation methods that these programs employ include:

- surveys by telephone, paper, and the Internet;
- use of outside evaluators;
- one-time and longitudinal research;
- pre/post tests (also called intake/exit surveys);
- reflective papers written by youth;
- evaluation conducted at multiple points during the program;
- focus groups or small group evaluation;
- interviews at reunion gatherings;
- feedback from the teaching staff, counselors, parents, pastors, and youth ministers;
- tracking of participants over time.

A delay in filling the project director's position was reported as a major setback by several theological schools. Apparently the skill set required to fill such a position is difficult to find. A turnover in project director was also named by some schools as a setback. As programs are launched and gain momentum, it is desirable to maintain consistent leadership for at least a few years. Project directors also reported that a change in the presidency or the retirement of a key faculty member was a blow to a program seeking to become established in the seminary. In other cases, a new president or faculty member brought renewed energy and commitment to the Theological Program for High School Youth.

Sustainability remains the big open question for these projects. With many seminaries struggling to meet regular budgeted expenses in a difficult economy, it is a struggle for some to consider the additional expense of maintaining the projects after the grant runs out. In some cases, schools have rolled the cost

of maintaining the program into a capital campaign. In other cases, they have used the sustainability grant to hire a fund-raising consultant to assist in the design of a plan. Most of the first-round programs have already engaged in "rightsizing"[23] their project to the school. A cost-benefit analysis of each component has been conducted and designs have been altered to accommodate a program that can be sustained. Some theological schools, for example, Haggard School of Theology, find that tuition fees cover the cost of programming, but they still need to raise funds from external sources to pay the costs of the institutional infrastructure. Seminaries have been delighted to discover some donors who have an extra pocket of funds designated for projects related to young people. Seminaries have forged new partnerships with denominations and independent youth ministry organizations to continue the essential work, sometimes in new ways.

Impact

While it has been demonstrated that schools frame goals in ways that are appropriate to their theological tradition and address these goals through various learning strategies, the question remains: do they actually achieve their goals? In this relatively early stage of these projects, that cannot be determined. However, we can ask about evidence of the immediate impact of these programs on youth. We can also ask about the impact on other people and institutions connected with these programs.

Youth. Project Director Ruth Fortis of Trinity Lutheran Seminary offers evidence of the impact on youth who participated in the summer Seminary Sampler program:

> They think about the people they met; they tackle volunteer activities during college; they decide on a major based on Sampler participation; they have maintained friendships and prayer chains with others in their group; they lead their youth group with ideas and actions when they return; they request to be more actively involved in worship leadership; they cherish being considered bright enough to tackle tough subjects; they participate in programs like Youth Encounter and ELCA summer internships that they learned about at Sampler; and they feel more confident in expressing their faith to others. It has shaped their involvement in their home congregations or campus ministries.[24]

Kathy, a Sampler alumna from 1999 is an example of one whose life has been deeply impacted by her experience in a Theological Program for High School Youth. Kathy emailed Ruth just after she graduated from college, four years after her Sampler experience. She reported that she was the baccalaureate speaker during graduation weekend. She completed a novel-length creative nonfiction work about her Aunt Debbie who has Downs Syndrome. She describes her two career options, both oriented toward service, "because I realize we can be ministers wherever we are."

This report and example of a youth's framing of her life's work is representative of what all the programs say about how youths' lives were different after participating in a Theological Program for High School Youth. In addition, project directors report that significant numbers of youth participants:

- choose to attend a church-related college or Bible college.
- choose a "pre-seminary" track.
- declare that they are considering or pursing a church vocation.

The question must be raised whether these programs just attract teens who are already interested in studying theology and are already considering church vocations, or whether these programs actually influence them in this direction. Undoubtedly it is true that many participants attend because they are already headed that way. As mentioned above, some programs only select teens who say they are exploring a church vocation. However this is not true of all the programs. Some programs that conducted pre-and post-tests to measure the change in interest in theology and a church vocation found that the interest increased after the program.

- Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis found that participants in their four-day career exploration event increased on average one level in receptivity to serving in a church vocation.[25]
- The Interdenominational Theological Center found that the number of youth who said they were "sure" or "very sure" they would pursue a career in ministry tripled after the month-long academy.[26]

Even the teens who were heavily socialized in their traditions, reared in very communitarian settings, and attended church-related or home schools, gain something extra from these programs. One girl—a daughter of a seminary president—told me the program made more of a difference to her faith than anything she had ever experienced. Teens less socialized in the knowledge and practices of their faith traditions also found that these programs gave Christian faith meaning in their lives. A boy from a mixed religious background (father a Buddhist, mother a member of the Christian Reformed Church) told me as a result of the Calvin program, he loved Reformed theology. It gave his life meaning as nothing ever had.

Some of the programs that have had more time to produce students for seminaries because they predate this initiative report the following findings:

- Pittsburgh Theological Seminary finds that ten of forty-six alumnae and alumni are enrolled in seminary.[27]
- At Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, one of twelve students in 1995 has entered seminary. Thirty-six of one hundred total are in pre-seminary instruction. Eight others are at public universities and may be interested. Half of those who attended the academy have chosen pre-seminary education in college.[28]

- Candler School of Theology reports on its participants since 1993: 49.6 percent majored or are majoring in something related to the program; 68.3 percent have taken courses in theology or religious studies in college; 22.6 percent are pursuing graduate study in theological or religious studies; and 14.8 percent are pursing ordination.[29]

Some of the first round grantees report the following:

- Multnomah says that 20 percent of program participants have enrolled in undergraduate studies that are either directly or indirectly related to ministry preparation. A far greater number have engaged in some type of introductory and ongoing ministerial commitment.[30]
- Lincoln Christian Seminary reports that 40 percent of the youth who participated in seminars will pursue Christian ministry.[31]
- Union Theological Seminary/Presbyterian School of Christian Education reports that 40 percent believe they are called into ministry and 40 percent are considering it along with other vocational choices. The remaining 20 percent are "searching for a clue."[32]
- St. John's School of Theology–Seminary finds that 20 percent of program participants continue to be engaged in theological studies after the program.[33]
- Calvin Theological Seminary reports that six of the original thirty-five participants in 1999 and five of thirty-five participants in 2000 are now enrolled at seminary, with five at Calvin.[34]
- Trinity Lutheran Seminary reports that one participant is enrolled in a joint MDiv/JD degree program and several others entered seminary in the fall of 2004.[35]
- Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary reports that 38 percent of their most recent participants expressed a strong interest in attending seminary following college.[36]
- Newman Theological College reports that in a follow-up with a sample of six program participants, half said they are considering church ministry.

Some of the second round grantees report the following:

- Emmanuel School of Religion finds that 60 percent of youth who attended conferences are seriously interested in vocational ministry.[37]
- Fuller Theological Seminary reports that 50 percent are seriously considering careers in vocational ministry.[38]
- Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary finds the numbers indicating increase in interest in church vocations rose one year and declined the other.[39]
- North American Baptist Seminary reports that half of their participants are interested in a church vocation.[40]

- Gardner-Webb University reports the following on their participants: 43 percent affirm a definite call to ministry; 32 percent think they are called.

There are too many variables to compare whether the theological schools using the more direct approach to exploring a church vocation yield more participants who said they intend to pursue that path than the theological schools that approach the topic more broadly. However, they are more likely to measure the statistics!

Numbers hardly tell the stories of the young lives that were transformed through these programs. Project directors and others affiliated with the programs have an infinite number of these stories to tell. One is from Barbara Moses of Eastern Mennonite Seminary describing the experience of taking approximately fifty students to Zimbabwe to attend an international gathering hosted by Brethren in Christ and a Global Youth Summit. One youth participant, Kaija, had many obstacles to overcome in her background, especially with her father in prison and the rest of her family living in a shelter. She discovered through her experience in Zimbabwe that she was rich because she had food, clothing, and a good bed. In Zimbabwe, each member of the team was handed a key and a roll of toilet paper and shown a thin mattress on which to sleep. The teens were very moved by the experience of meeting the children who lived in an orphanage because their parents had died of AIDS. Kaija felt God's call to work with women and children through the experience. The group had been primed to listen for God's call by reflecting on the stories of Samuel, Moses, and Abraham.

Another story is from the Youth in Theology and Ministry Program (YTM) at St. John's University School of Theology–Seminary. Two girls were moved by compassion for the Sudanese "lost boys" who were arriving as refugees in their community of Fargo, North Dakota. They decided to focus their YTM parish team service project on providing winter coats for the forty-two refugee boys. They not only achieved their goal, but they raised public awareness of these newcomers by speaking on local television and created an atmosphere of hospitality for them in the community. As one of the girls said, "They became part of our family."

Another story from Scott Klemsz of Concordia Theological Seminary at Fort Wayne, Indiana, is about the power of friendships forged at Christ Academy to enable young people to consider their call. Seth from Mississippi was an all-state football player and Fulbright scholar planning to attend a non-Lutheran college. He planned to be a lawyer. His roommate at Christ Academy was Jacob, whose father was a pastor. Jacob also was a football player, planned to attend a non-Lutheran college, and had no intention of becoming a pastor. After Christ Academy, they did not go their separate ways. They overcame the geographical distance that separated them and kept in close touch via the Internet during their college years. Seth eventually transferred to a Lutheran college and enrolled in the pre-seminary track. Jacob also decided to become a pastor. Apparently seeds were planted at Christ Academy that germinated over the years and were nurtured by their continuing conversation. No one anticipated these surprising developments.

Regardless of whether youth enter church vocations as a result of their participation in these programs, their involvement in the church is likely to be to be higher than average. Candler School of Theology reports that 71.4 percent of their 18- to 26-year-old alumnae and alumni are currently part of a faith community or religious group during what is considered the peak "drop out years" of religious involvement.[41] Over 48 percent of these young people hold leadership roles in their religious communities.[42] It appears that these programs are reframing the idea of vocation so that regardless of career choice, young people respond to a call to be leaders in their churches.

Theological educators. While these programs are focused on high school youth, others associated with the programs have been impacted as well. One of the hunches Craig Dykstra had when he conceived of this initiative was: "Young people will have an impact on those who teach them, especially the faculties of theological schools."[43] There is now plenty of evidence to support this hunch.

Faculty members who teach in these programs say they are profoundly moved by their interaction with teens. Timothy Wengert, Ministerium of Pennsylvania Professor of the History of Christianity at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, shared a moving testimony at the 2003 Forum. Self-described as "someone who lives in the sixteenth century," he was heartened to discover that age-old theological questions are relevant to young people today. He felt the power of the young people ministering to him as, in his time of grief with the recent death of his wife, "the Body of Christ [the youth] carried me" in a ministry of Word and Sacrament.

A longer story bears inclusion as it identifies a "fear of youth" that has been mentioned by others. A report from Catholic Theological Union begins with the reaction of the faculty when the idea for the Peacebuilder's Initiative was broached.

> "We have no business teaching theology to teenagers. We are a graduate level school of theology." During the initial implementation phase of the program there was concern on the part of faculty members about CTU's institutional capability to integrate a high school youth program into the school's curriculum. This concern came from a fear that professors who regularly teach adult graduate students would not know how to relate to, and, therefore, teach teenagers.
>
> In response to this apprehension, the program's staff sponsored multiple conversation sessions with high school youth. . . . During a focus group discussion with teens one young woman said quite emphatically, "Whatever you do, please don't give us the Fisher Price version of theology." She went on to say that one of the things that would excite her most about spending a week at CTU is the chance to get undiluted theology, theology rich and complex enough to be engaged on different levels allowing a bright young person to formulate ideas about God and the Church.[44]

Catholic Theological Union commented that later, faculty and staff alike were "transformed by the energy, maturity, seriousness, zeal, and deep commitment to faith" that the youth participants possessed. This seminary and others report that their experience of teaching the teens influenced their own pedagogical styles. Iliff School of Theology reports: "Some administrators are applying FaithTrek's methodologies to their own organizational work, including Iliff's academic dean, who is using Appreciative Inquiry in faculty development settings."[45]

Undergraduate and seminarian mentors. These programs are aimed at assisting high school age youth in an exploration of theology and vocation, but in an unexpected way, they have a similar impact on the college-age students and seminarians who staff the programs as counselors and mentors. Many of the project directors report that college students are now planning careers in ministry; some seminary students have shifted to a focus on youth ministry; some PhD students have decided to conduct their research on adolescents. Some of the Duke Youth Academy staff are conducting their own vocational exploration as a follow-up to their experience.

Youth ministers, pastors, teachers, and parents. Some programs include training in youth ministry for youth ministers, pastors, and other adults. As mentioned above, sometimes this is part of a degree or certificate program. Project directors also report that they are increasingly sought out by pastors and youth ministers who want to learn about youth ministry because of the visibility of their programs. The network of Lutheran youth ministers in the San Francisco area, for example, has sought out the director of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary's program to conduct training for them. While most project directors who have these components in their programs report that their work is appreciated, others report frustration with attaining adequate attendance at training events to make them viable.

A few programs offer training for teachers in church-related high schools. Newman Theological College cites this as one of their most significant contributions. Religious education teachers in area Catholic high schools are renewed in their vocation through the teacher training events Newman hosts in conjunction with their daylong events for youth.

One unanticipated impact of the programs is the benefit of the program to parents of teen participants. Parents have expressed in letters that they are impressed with the positive changes that took place in their teens because of the programs. Some have become involved in fund raising for the programs. Parents of St. Mary's teens have elected to read some of their textbooks and have requested discussions with the faculty. A few programs, for example Catholic Theological Union and the Interdenominational Theological Center, offer workshops or forums for parents. Parents are included as part of "the village" that forms faith in young people. Some programs invite parents to closing banquet ceremonies.

Congregations and communities. "Youth leaven their congregational lumps," reports Fred Edie at Duke University Divinity School. Returning youth do have an impact on their congregations as they initiate their projects and ask to lead worship and serve in all areas of the congregation. Saint Meinrad School of Theology reports that liturgical communities form in parishes

when teams return home. Eden Theological Seminary is confident that local and conference-level youth ministries were "kick started" by their program called "Start Something."

Especially when youth conduct projects in their congregations or communities, they have an impact. One Union Theological Seminary/PSCE participant restarted her church's youth group. Another developed a joint worship service for a white and a black congregation. One participant in the Urban Youth Academy (Bethel and Luther) started a dance team for inner city children. Another bought manicure supplies so she could have conversations with elderly nursing home residents while she manicured their nails. Some youth work with community organizations that have never before cooperated with the church. Youth are reframing the work of people in non-profits as "ministry" and blurring the divide between faith and secular communities.

College and university campuses. Colleges affiliated with theological schools in this initiative are pleased with the recruitment of program alumnae and alumni to their campuses. Even more, campus ministers report that these students "leaven the campus lumps" with their high expectations of theological discourse and ministry activity. At the 2003 Forum, College of Wooster Campus Minister Linda Morgan Clement described Meka and Emily, two alumnae of Candler's program. Meka insisted that the campus minister organize an international service trip because, as a woman of color, she felt it was important for students at the college to experience more diversity. She herself lobbied for and got a course in liberation theology to be added to the curriculum. Meka and Emily together, with the help of the campus minister, started interfaith dialogue on campus. As Linda said with humor, "Meka and Emily, you've made my life more difficult. Thank you!"

Theological schools. The youth programs have a mixed impact on the theological schools, depending on whether the institution "owns" the project. Some theological schools are hardly aware that they sponsor this project. Especially when it is hosted off campus and when faculty do not teach in it, the theological school can be oblivious to its presence. Other theological schools revel in the weeks when hoards of high-energy teens fill up their dorms, dining hall, and classrooms. Iliff has intentionally moved FaithTrek's program components to the campus after hosting it elsewhere, because they want it to be more connected to the seminary. Wartburg's commitment to the program is evident in their allocation of scarce space on campus to the project.

Theological schools that own the project say that their interaction with youth has changed them. Some are adding youth ministry components to their curriculum. Concordia at Fort Wayne models its orientation curriculum for new MDiv students on what they developed for Christ Academy. Lincoln Christian Seminary has incorporated elements of its WorldView Eyes curriculum into its MDiv curriculum. While I witnessed on more than one occasion how the noise of the teens interrupted the repose of the summer school sessions for adults, I observed that the vitality youth contributed was infinitely greater than the minor annoyances. Saint Meinrad School of Theology reported that the monks were moved and inspired by the earnestness and humility of the program's students, especially as they came together in the solemn Rite

of Reconciliation. Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary reports, "The youth program gives the faculty hope."

Denominations. It remains to be seen what impact these programs will have on denominations because denominations are further removed from the youth projects than other entities. Denominations with a single seminary tend to feel the impact sooner. Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Calvin Theological Seminary, Huron University College, and others say that the project is embraced by their denomination as a promising way to raise up leadership in the church.

Jude Steers of Huron University College tells a story of the youth participants in Ask & Imagine 2000.

> In several sessions at the summer program, the issue was raised of the abuses experienced by Native peoples living at church-run residential schools that occurred decades earlier, and the current lawsuits and litigation process with the church. The Ask & Imagine group included some native people as participants. A small group of participants were inspired to address the uncertainty that existed in parishes over fears that parishes would close or dioceses might be bankrupted as the result of lawsuits. Through a province-wide liturgical and educational event developed by the Ask & Imagine alumni, the provincial synod, provincial house of bishops and dozens of parishes who participated were reminded that while church *buildings* may close, the church is people, not buildings, and what is essential is our ongoing mission of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous people. The young people discovered that what they had learned and reflected on at Ask & Imagine could indeed have an impact on the wider church.

Denominations with multiple seminaries are noticing the presence of these programs as well. The seminaries in The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America held a consultation in March 2004 at the denomination's headquarters with the colleges and universities with Lilly grants in Theological Programs for the Exploration of Vocation. Efforts are being made to maximize the benefits of these programs as they collaborate and share lessons. Eden Theological Seminary made the most ambitious inroads into serving its denomination as they hosted youth retreats in every conference of the United Church of Christ. They report that impact is felt mostly on the conference and local level at this time.

Sometimes the impact is felt most in middle judicatories. The Virginia Baptist Association, in collaboration with designers of the youth program at Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond, developed a new curriculum on the call to ministry to use with congregations. They now promote "Ministry Sundays" on a regular basis as a way to create an occasion for presenting the idea of a call.

Non-denominational or multi-denominational theological schools that sponsor these programs are making connections with various regional and national agencies of different denominations. The new partnerships that are forming are positively changing ways of relating.

So are the hopes fulfilled for this experiment? In most cases the answer is a resounding yes. In the next section I will offer some ideas that suggest a confluence of critical factors that, when present, help some projects to achieve "staying power" over time.

What undergirds success?

It has been demonstrated that there are many approaches to designing a Theological Program for High School Youth and variations in how goals are framed and addressed according to the theology and commitments of particular schools. With this variety, it is not possible to name particular factors that help projects to succeed in their aims. Yet across the programs there are some key factors that account for their viability. When missing, these factors tend to predict that programs will struggle. Here I will name three things I consider the critical components of a theological program for high school youth.

First, the theological school must "own" the project as part of its core mission. This appears to happen when project directors are integral to the faculty or staff of the theological school and when faculty members of all disciplines teach in the program. When the program is outsourced to others to run and teach, it quickly becomes marginalized in the seminary. Eventually it will either wither and die for lack of attention and funding or break off as a separate entity disconnected from the seminary.

Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, reported the story of the multiyear process whereby the faculty of the seminary embraced the idea of hosting a theological program for high school youth. The seminary was a recipient of a planning grant in the first round of grant making and was named as a recipient for the implementation grant. However, faculty registered so much concern about the project that the president eventually decided the seminary should not accept the implementation money. The faculty said they did not know how to work with youth and they were not convinced that it was part of their mission as a seminary. By the time the second opportunity to apply was offered, the faculty had reflected on their issues and decided unanimously to participate. A faculty member who had been most resistant to the idea became its strongest proponent. As the president noted, the school needed to wait for the right time, the right person (project director Andrew Brubacher Kaethler), the right partners (its mission board and camps) and the right structure.

Second, a seminary cannot mount a program of this magnitude and expense without cultivating partners to share in this work. The level and types of partnerships that these programs have forged are impressive. (See "The experiment" above.) "A complex constellation of partnerships is the greatest strength of the program" says President Thomas Graves at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. He adds, "We underestimated the work of cooperation and communication with partners." While it sometimes takes more

energy to collaborate than it does to go solo, the larger work of cultivating the "the culture of the call" will be done by a host of institutions over time.

The two factors mentioned are essential for the viability of the program. The third factor I mention is essential to its success as part of this initiative as Lilly Endowment has defined it. Specifically, what distinguishes these programs from most youth ministry programs is the degree of rigor and challenge in the study of theology, combined with vocational exploration, including the presentation of a church vocation as a viable option. If a program is not asking young people to ask deeply penetrating theological questions and offering them sustained theological discussion about serious personal and social issues, it forfeits its reason to be sponsored by a graduate school of theology. Similarly, if it cannot facilitate the discernment of a call to ministry in both the broad sense in which all the baptized are called and in the particular sense in which pastors, educators, mission co-workers, and other church professionals are called, then it is not strengthening the church's leadership and its future.

To be sure, there were major flaws that existed in the design of some programs that became evident as they were implemented. One program depended on adults from the congregation to attend residential sessions with their teens. They discovered that few could afford to give that much vacation time from their work. Another program aimed to start too much all at once. The project director was overwhelmed until they eliminated half of the plan. In a few cases, there was no major flaw in the design, but there were critical problems with securing the right personnel to run the program. Momentum was lost when a project director did not work out. It remains to be seen whether some will recover their stride and continue.

In summary, for a Theological Program for High School Youth to succeed over time, it must be "owned" by the seminary and find significant partners to share the larger work. In addition, a seminary must be able to evaluate, redesign, and make adjustments in its design and staffing. Most of all, it must not diffuse its energy by trying to do too much. It must focus on the two distinctive goals of engagement in theology and exploration of vocation. Theological seminaries are in the business of education, not youth ministry. They complement—not duplicate—the long-term, more comprehensive Christian formation that is available to teens through their congregations, camps, schools, and parachurch groups.

Youth, theological study and practice, and exploration of Christian vocation

In their proposals, grantees painted a picture of a need for these programs. Since then, they have learned a great deal more as they have hosted youth on their campuses, taught them in their classrooms, taken them on trips, and followed them as they have returned home, gone to college and started careers.

What has been learned about youth? Peer group meetings have proved to be an excellent venue for distilling key learnings about youth across the programs. Theological schools, represented by their presidents, deans, faculty, project directors, other staff and occasionally by some youth,[46] report:

- "Young people in our programs come to us with rich gifts and passion for life.
- They have an eagerness for theological thinking and openness to learning and being formed by new ideas.
- They are hungering for theology, even though they are in many ways religiously unprepared."[47]

The hunger to study theology and to engage in deep, critical conversation about the life of faith were evident to me as I visited various programs. The opportunity to ask uncomfortable questions with confidence that they could be addressed appears to be one of the distinctive "extras" that Theological Programs for High School Youth offer. Despite the common assumption that youth will gravitate to what is fun and easy, in fact they relish the rigor of the challenges in these programs. As a visitor to Calvin's "Facing Your Future" program in 2000, I observed youth enthralled in two-hour lectures.

> The first lecture was at 8 a.m. (Note the early hour!) A retired professor, Dr. Holwerda, delivered a fast-paced lecture on the topic of prophecy as it related to the land of Israel. The focus was turned toward the teens' upcoming trip to Israel. The professor asked: How do you define *Israel*? He demonstrated how the promise of Isaiah 54:1 is universalized in Jesus Christ. Similarly he asked: What about *the temple? The land? Jerusalem? The law?* These were shown to be redefined and universalized through Christ. Romans 9–11 was referenced as Paul talked about Israel as the faith-filled people, not as the Jewish people.
>
> At the break at 9 a.m., the professor was surrounded by students asking him questions. At the conclusion of his lecture at 10 a.m., again he was swarmed. These are curious and attentive students. Like the students at Multnomah, they are keenly interested in theology and absorb it like sponges.[48]

What has been learned about deepening their theological understandings and practices of the Christian faith? Regardless of theological orientation and differences in program strategies, theological schools report universally that it is critical to recognize and respond to the depth of authentic questioning that is ongoing in youth, and to provide a "holding environment" for them to express and engage these questions. If youth do not come with questions, a consciousness-raising of the dissonance of the Christian life with the dominant trends in society (e.g., violence, injustice, and consumerism) can stimulate them to take a critical stance.

Secondly, youth deepen their theological understandings as they are formed in Christian practices, such as worship, prayer, Bible study, hospitality, and service. Especially in the powerful experience of living in community, patterns of the Christian life can take hold. Habits are formed; thinking and living are shaped in lasting ways.

Theological schools note the importance of ongoing mentoring and support for youth beyond the programs. They are eager to develop and train adult leaders and pastors to be mentors of youth in their congregation. A desire to support families as communities of faith formation was also affirmed.

What assists young people in an exploration of their Christian vocation? As one peer group summarized, "By focusing on the sense of call, one asks, 'Who calls?' This elevates the questions of theology to a central position."[49] The heart of the vocational enterprise is theological exploration for understanding how one joins in Christ's ministry of reconciliation in the world. Deepening the knowledge of God in their lives is the primary strategy. That is what distinguishes it from a more secular discovery of one's identity or career path.

How did programs deepen the knowledge of God in teens' lives? As illustrated above, this happens in an infinite number of ways that involve heart, mind, and body. Teens told me how this happened, for example, in this interview with two participants in Gordon-Conwell's Compass program.

> Anna and Katherine talked about how they learned that you could trust God when you reached your limits. Both were very challenged by the high ropes course at LaVida. Katherine, for the first time in her life, thought she was going to die, as she had to cross over a wobbly plank bridge high in the air. She broke down with fear but continued anyway. Anna also was paralyzed with fear but said God was there when she had no ability to continue. Crossing the bridge became a powerful metaphor for talking about the Christian walk.[50]

A good number of the theological schools find the theology of baptism to be a rich starting point for vocational exploration, because baptism is the ritual that marks initiation into the Christian life. While they rarely perform a baptism as part of the program, they seek to form students into Christian baptismal identity by referencing the baptismal texts, images, and themes in worship, the arts, and throughout the activities of the program. A number of other programs focus on the gifts that God has given each young person for building up the Body of Christ. They engage youth in a process of discerning their particular gifts. Other programs focus on leadership and the distinctiveness of Christ's model of servant leadership. They offer teens experiences in leadership in a variety of areas: worship, teaching, ministry with younger youth, with peers, and with adults. Many programs use all these themes and others as theological foci for exploring Christian vocation.

What encourages young people to consider a church vocation as a viable option for their life's work? "'Falling in love with theology' is not what motivates kids to think about ministry," summarized one peer group of theological educators working with these projects. "They respond best to a sense of agency and a sense that they can bring about greater justice. At the same time, they need help in growing theologically and developing skills for service."[51] The interrelationship between the two overall goals of the initiative and the strategies used to achieve them is evident as projects come to life with actual

youth participation. "Students may not think their way into new ways of living, but they may live their way into new forms of thinking."[52]

Two approaches to encouraging vocational exploration are outlined above under "Goal #2: Encouragement of Vocations in Christian Ministry" (p. 16). Yet, whether one approaches the issue of church vocations directly or more broadly, some general observations characterize both approaches. Youth appear to benefit just from being around religious professionals and seminary students. One girl told a project director, "Some day I want to do your job." Just living or studying on a seminary campus for a brief period appears to expand their imagination about what it would be like to study for a church vocation.

Youth also appreciate hearing directly from church professionals about the nature and meaning of their work. Most youth report that they had no idea that there were so many options for work in the church. They assumed that being a pastor or a youth minister were the only paths open to them, because they were the ones with which they were most familiar.

Finally, these programs offer an occasion for young people to consider a life's work for which they may not feel support at home or by their peers. Project Director Jeff Kaster at St. John's tells about James who attended Youth in Theology and Ministry (YTM). "During a large group discussion on vocation and listening to God's call, James stood up and said to the group, 'I believe God is calling me to the priesthood.' His peers immediately starting clapping and cheering for him." Later James wrote to Jeff asking him to write a recommendation for admission to Catholic University of America and included the comment: "YTM was by far the most life-changing experience of my life. I think that it was the experience at YTM that made me first consider a career in something theology-related, then possibly the priesthood."

Theological schools as agents of change

Theological schools embarked on a bold enterprise to effect change in the church's ministry with youth and in the ecology of institutions that call the next generation into church leadership. Two sets of questions will be addressed in this section: questions about the kind of change theological schools can accomplish and the role of theological education in the identification and recruitment of pastoral leaders. Many of the ideas and quotes come from presidents and deans who reflected together on the changes that have occurred in relationship to their grants.[53]

What have we learned about the kind of change that theological schools can accomplish? These programs represent new thinking about the role of theological schools in the ecology of church institutions. Seminaries are generally regarded as intellectual centers of their traditions. Scholarship and education are their mission. Their job is to educate, form, and train. With these new programs, theological schools have stepped into the role of providing programming for the church. These grants help theological institutions think more broadly about how they serve the church. These grants have widened the scope of what is expected in theological education. As executive director

of The Association of Theological Schools, Daniel Aleshire says, "Schools were degree-granting institutions. Now they are doing more."

These grants set a tone of mutual engagement of church and seminary. Seminaries are moving "to connect with the church at a point of mutual need, with the need being the need to serve youth."

Relationships among seminaries, denominations, and congregations have shifted in various ways. Denominations used to be mediators. Now schools "are retail, not just wholesale." They are now viewed as resources to congregations, when before this was regarded as the job of denominations. Most denominations appear to appreciate the direct engagement of theological schools with congregations and their shared interest in youth and recruitment for church leadership.

Seminaries generally educate graduate students. These new programs have put them in contact with a different population, one that is often marginalized and feared. By educating high school youth, theological schools have invested some of the best intellectual resources of the church into its youth. From the perspective of some leaders of theological schools, the gain for the school is incalculable. As Catholic Theological Union President Donald Senior says, these programs "have forced seminaries to connect with young people, especially at a time when the
integrity of the church with young people is questioned. There is an element of fear in interactions with youth that seminaries have overcome. The programs have put seminaries in touch with networks that claim young people." Another president said, "Young people are a tonic. They restore confidence [in the future of the church.] It's a morale thing."

For theological schools to bring about this kind of change, sometimes they need to change themselves. This program offered them an opportunity to experiment with new models for theological education that are wholistic, transgenerational, inclusive of professional and lay resources, and action-based.

In addition, theological schools need certain kinds of capacities, partnerships, networks, and resources. The most important capacity is their imagination to conceive of this new work. The role of presidential leadership and key opinion-makers among the faculty in winning the support of the whole institution for this work has been critical. Partnerships with denominations at the national and regional levels have, in some cases, been a key. In other cases, partnerships with schools, church-related colleges, church-related camps, mission agencies, religious orders, parachurch organizations, and others have made the crucial difference. Seminaries have collaborated with established networks of pastors and youth ministers to build support for this new enterprise, especially in the area of recruitment. The infusion of financial resources from an outside source, Lilly Endowment, to seed these projects has made possible something that few could have tried in a stressful economic climate. And even more than money, Lilly has provided a vision, outside encouragement, and a cohort of mutually supportive colleagues to enable theological schools to risk this experiment.

What is the proper role of theological education in the identification and recruitment of pastoral leaders? These programs represent part of a larger shift in the stance of theological institutions on recruitment. Theological schools today are not just receiving candidates; they are shaping the partners that send candidates to the school. As Daniel Aleshire says, "For years theological education was for folk who showed up to get a degree. Now theological schools are more responsible for who shows up."

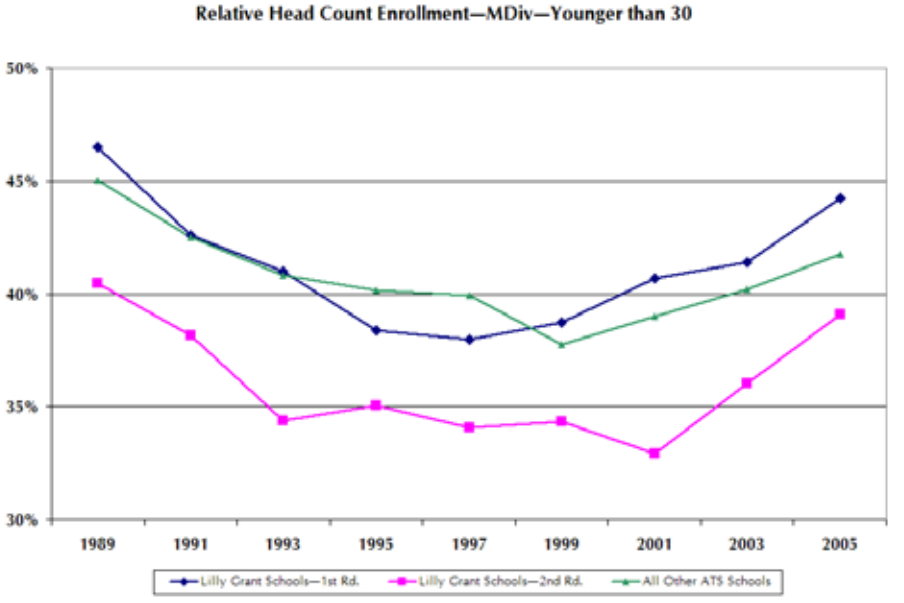
Aleshire offers a comparison between the theological schools in the first round and second round of Theological Programs for High School Youth (TPHSY) grant making with all other theological schools in The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the age of their students. As Figure A shows, in 1995, 38 percent of the MDiv students at TPHSY schools were age 29 and younger, compared to 39 percent for all other ATS schools. By fall of 2003, the age 29 and under enrollment at the TPHSY schools had climbed to 43 percent (a substantial gain from 38 percent in 1995), while the percentage of age 29 and younger students changed only from 39 percent to 40 percent for the other ATS schools. The TPHSY schools started slightly behind the other ATS schools and have moved several percentage points ahead of them. In the second round of grant making, new TPHSY schools were below both first round and other schools in ATS, but from 2001–2003, they appear to be catching up.

Why have theological schools with these grants in the first round started enrolling a younger MDiv population in comparison to other ATS schools? Why have theological schools in the second round experienced a marked increase in younger students? The data suggest that (1) the schools that sought and received these grants may be taking intentional steps to reach a younger population, and/or (2) the high school programs have an influence on the theological schools themselves, orienting them toward a younger population. Without arguing for a cause and effect, it appears that there is an association between hosting a Theological Program for High School Youth and lowering the average age of the MDiv student population.

In any case, the issue of whether the theological school actively seeks a particular kind of student (younger or otherwise) raises deeper core questions about the responsibility of the theological community. Is it responsible for more than scholarship? Is it the theological school's responsibility to shape the intelligence and imagination of youth who may be the theologically trained leaders of the church in the future and are already leaders in the church today? The actions of these schools to create these programs represent a resounding yes. They affirm a commitment to educating church leaders at a younger age and to expanding their imaginations about where God's call in their lives might lead them.

How does theological education fit into the larger landscape and ecology of institutions that nurture youth and develop church leadership? While theological schools have long been concerned with the nurture of youth and their development as church leaders, until recently they have mostly acted on this by training pastors, educators, youth ministers, and other church professionals to teach and minister with youth in other settings. With Theological Programs for High School Youth, nearly one-fourth of the ATS accredited theological

Figure A: Comparison between Lilly TPHSY Schools Round One, Round Two, and All Other ATS Schools by Age of MDiv Students[54]



schools in the United States and Canada have jumped into the arena to do this work in a more direct way.

As stated above, there is a wide range of institutions (especially congregations/parishes, schools, colleges, camps, and denominations) that have been doing this work for decades, even centuries. It is notable that Lilly has funded a parallel initiative for colleges and universities to provide college-age young people an opportunity to explore vocation in a theological context.[55] Project directors often comment that they are eager to work in concert with institutions and other influential people in teens' lives, especially parents, pastors and other adults in the church to form youth in faith and mission as well as with colleges and universities who will receive them next.

In these times when the secular culture seems to present an ever greater challenge to the church as it seeks to point to God's truth and justice and a way of living that is continually transformed by God, it is timely for theological schools to seize the opportunity to engage directly with youth. They are a gift to theological seminaries as they point to the future of Christian ministry and theological education. Theological educators confirm,

> We learned that youth are in the vanguard of new forms of ministry, and want to be agents of more holistic and creative

> forms of ministry. . . . Youth live to change. Kids want to contribute. They are especially interested in peace and justice ministries, and connect best with hands-on approaches to learning. They are open to racially, culturally, and religiously diverse modes of ministry. They need to overcome negative publicity about professional ministry. They respond well when teachers, mentors, and issues are relevant and genuine. Holistic approaches, combining worship, education, service, and physical activity work best. Kids appreciate the special spaces created to do this kind of work.[56]

Another peer group observed, "We all came to the realization that we have been leaving them [youth] out of the picture for too long in too many ways." They summarize their observations of the capacities of youth and their leadership as follows:

Youth:

- want rich meaningful lives.
- need help interpreting the world.
- are ready to open up avenues to deeper personal faith.
- feel they can make a difference.
- need help channeling their energies.
- want to know the truth.
- want to know if the Bible and their church are true.
- are apostles waiting for a call. . . .[57]

Carol E. Lytch coordinated the two streams of grantmaking by Lilly Endowment to theological schools from 1999–2006: the Theological Programs for High School Youth and the Program to Enhance Theological Schools' Capacities to Prepare Candidates for Congregational Ministry. In September 2006, she joined the staff of The Association of Theological Schools as assistant executive director.

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Appendix A

Theological Schools Funded by Lilly Endowment since 1993 in Theological Programs for High School Youth

Andover Newton Theological School
Newton Centre, MA
fyi~Faith Youth Institute
www.ants.edu

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
Elkhart, IN
!Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth
www.ambs.edu/!explore

Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond
Richmond,VA
The Samuel Project: Awakening to God's Call
www.thesamuelproject.org

Bethel Seminary of Bethel University and Luther Seminary
St. Paul, MN
Urban Leadership Academy
www.urbanacademy.net

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
Facing Your Future
www.calvinseminary.edu/fyf

Candler School of Theology of Emory University
Atlanta, GA
Youth Theological Initiative
www.candler.emory.edu

Catholic Theological Union
Chicago, IL
The Peacebuilders Initiative
www.ctu.edu

Chicago Theological Seminary
Chicago, IL
DEPTH
www.depthyouth.org

Christian Theological Seminary
Indianapolis, IN
Disciples House for Youth
www.cts.edu

Claremont School of Theology
Claremont, CA
Youth Discipleship Project (1998–2002)
The Narrative Pedagogies with Youth Project (2003–present)
www.cst.edu/academic_resources/narrative_pedogogies.php

Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, MO
Exploring Church Careers Event (ECCE)
www.csl.edu/Home.html

Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, IN
Christ Academy
www.ctsfw.edu/admission/academy

Covenant Theological Seminary
St. Louis, MO
Youth in Ministry Institute (YIMI)
www.covenantseminary.edu/yimi/default.asp

Duke University Divinity School
Durham, NC
Duke Youth Academy for Christian Formation
www.duyouth.duke.edu

Eastern Mennonite Seminary of Eastern Mennonite University
Harrisonburg, VA
Learning, Exploring, And Participating (LEAP)
www.leap.emu.edu

Eden Theological Seminary
St. Louis, MO
Start Something! God's Calling You
www.startsomething.org/

Emmanuel School of Religion
Johnson City, TN
Partnership for Youth in Ministry
www.youthinministry.org

Fuller Theological Seminary
Pasadena, CA
The Student Leadership Project
www.Theslp.org

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Evanston, IL
Faith Passage
www.garrett.nwu.edu/content.asp?A=prosp&C=1350&bhcp=1

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
South Hamilton, MA
The Ministry Center for Christian Youth: COMPASS
www.gordonconwell.edu/ockenga/mccy

Haggard School of Theology of Azusa Pacific University
Azusa, CA
Youth Leadership Institute
www.yliapu.org or www.apu.edu/yli

Huron University College Faculty of Theology
London, ON,
Canada Ask and Imagine: Life, Leadership and Theological
www.askandimagine.org Exploration for Anglican Youth

Iliff School of Theology
Denver, CO
FaithTrek: Theological and Vocational Exploration
www.faithtrek.org for Youth

Interdenominational Theological Center
Atlanta, GA
Youth Hope-Builders Academy
www.itc.edu

Lancaster Theological Seminary
Lancaster, PA
Leadership Now: Spiritual Formation of Youth
www.lancasterseminary.edu/youth_leadership_now/upcoming_recent_youth_events.htm

Lincoln Christian Seminary
Lincoln, IL
Worldview Eyes
www.worldvieweyes.org

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
Chicago, IL
Youth In Mission
www.lstc.edu/events/YIM/YIM_splash.html

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg
Gettysburg, PA
Theological Education with Youth
http://tey.easterncluster.org

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA
Theological Education with Youth (TEY)
http://tey.easterncluster.org

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary
Fresno, CA
Teens Hearing the Call of God
www.ministryquest.com

Multnomah Biblical Seminary
Portland, OR
Credo
www.multnomah.edu

Newman Theological College
Edmonton, AB
Littlemore Program for High School Youth
www.newman-littlemore.ab.ca

North American Baptist Seminary
Sioux Falls, SD
Young Leaders Project
www.nabs.edu

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
Berkeley, CA
Life Together
www.plts.edu

Pacific School of Religion
Berkeley, CA
Represent to Witness (R2W)
www.psr.edu/pana.cfm?m=133

Perkins School of Theology Southern Methodist University
Dallas, TX
Perkins Youth School of Theology
www.smu.edu/theology/PYST/PYST_main.html

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Pittsburgh,PA
Summer Youth Institute (SYI)
www.summeryouthinstitute.org

Queen's Theological College
Kingston, ON
Future Quest: Journeying Inward, Looking Outward
www.queensu.ca/theology or www.queensu.ca/theology/F_Quest/index.html

Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Pittsburgh, PA
Theological Foundations for Youth Program
www.rpts.edu

Saint Francis Seminary
St. Francis, WI
Tomorrow's Present
www.tomorrowspresent.org

St. John's University School of Theology–Seminary
Collegeville, MN
Youth in Theology & Ministry (YTM)
www.csbsju.edu/sot/ytm

St. Mary's Seminary and University
Baltimore, MD
Youth Theological Studies Program
www.stmarys.edu

Saint Meinrad School of Theology
St. Meinrad, IN
Saint Meinrad Youth Liturgical Leadership Program
www.saintmeinrad.edu/programs_youth_ovr.aspx

Saint Paul School of Theology
Kansas City, MO
youTheology: serve worship learn explore
www.youtheology.com

Trinity Lutheran Seminary
Columbus' OH
Summer Seminary Sampler
www.TrinityLutheranSeminary.edu

Union Theological Seminary
and Presbyterian School of Christian Education
Richmond, VA
Project Burning Bush
www.projectburningbush.org

Wartburg Theological Seminary
Dubuque, IA
The Wartburg Youth Leadership School (WYLS)
www.wartburgseminary.edu/template_centers.asp?id=229

Western Seminary
Portland, OR
TruthQuest
www.tqtraining.net

M. Christopher White School of Divinity of Gardner-Webb University
Boiling Springs, NC
Lilly Ministerial Vocation Program for Youth
www.divinity.gardner-webb.edu/gwu.shtml

Appendix B

Publications Related to Theological Programs for High School Youth

Michael Baizerman, Doug Magnuson, and Don C. Richter, "Reconceiving Youth Ministry," *Religious Education* 93, no. 3, (Summer 1998).

Dori Grinenko Baker, *Doing Girlfriend Theology: God-Talk with Young Women* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005).

Lisa-Marie Calderone-Stewart, *Changing Lives: Transformational Ministry and Today's Teens* (Dayton, OH: Pflaum, 2004).

Chap Clark, *Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers (Youth, Family, and Culture)* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004).

Craig Dunham and Doug Serven. *TwentySomeone: Finding Yourself in a Decade of Transition* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2003).

Fred Edie, "Cultivating Baptismal Spirituality in High School Youth," *Doxology* 19 (2002): 85–107.

———. "Uncovering Eucharistic Spirituality in High School Youth: 'Who Knew?'" *Doxology* 21 (2004).

Paul Hill, ed., *Up the Creek with a Paddle: Building Effective Youth and Family Ministry*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1998).

Alexander Levering Kern and Deane Lindsey Kern, eds., *New Voices and Visions of Transformation: Religious Writing from Rising Generations* (Newton Centre, MA: Andover Newton Theological School, 2005).

Brian Mahan, *Forgetting Ourselves on Purpose: The Ethics of Ambition* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

Joyce Mercer, *Gender, Violence and Faith: Adolescent Girls and a Theological Anthropology of Difference* (PhD dissertation, Emory University, 1997).

Steven Patty and Steve Keels, eds., *Impact: Student Ministry that will Transform a Generation* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2005).

Don C. Richter, "Roots and Wings: Practicing Theology with Youth," in *Agenda for Youth Ministry: Cultural Themes in Faith and Church,* eds. Dean Borgman and Christine Cook (London: Triangle, SPCK, 1998), 132–150.

———. "The Rumspringa Paradigm," *Insights* 118, no. 2, (Spring 2003): 20–24.

Joerg Rieger, "Theological Education between Street and Classroom: Report and Reflections," Apuntes: *Theological Reflections from the Hispanic Margin* (Spring 2005).

Frank Rogers Jr., "Finding God in the Graffiti: Narrative Pedagogy in Practice," *Claremont School of Theology E-Journal* 1, no. 1 (March 2004), www.cst.edu/enews/200403/ Rogers_GodInGraffiti.htm.

———. "Loving our Enemies: Contributions of the Narrative Arts to a Practice of Peacemaking," in *Choosing Peace Through Daily Practices,* ed. Ellen Ott Marshall (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005).

Kathi Turpin and Timothy Van Meter, "No Longer Guests: On the Dynamics of Agency and Formation in Ministry with Older Adolescents," *Journal of Youth and Theology* 1, no. 2 (November): 7–22.

David F. White, "A Decade of the Youth Theological Initiative: An Experiment in the Pedagogy of Communion," *Journal of Youth and Theology* 3, no. 1 (April 2004): 77–96.

———. "Empowering the Vocation of Youth as Youth: A Theological Vision for Youth Ministry," *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 13–30.

———. "The Long-term Influence of the Youth Theological Initiative Summer Academy on the Faith Development of High School Youth" (research report of the Youth Theological Initiative of Candler School of Theology of Emory University, 2004).

———. *Practicing Discernment with Youth: A Transformative Youth Ministry Approach* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, February 2005).

Appendix C

Theological Programs for High School Youth

Lilly Endowment seeks to support theological schools in establishing or sustaining programs for high school youth that (1) stimulate and nurture an excitement about theological learning and inquiry and (2) identify and encourage a new generation of young Christians to consider vocations in Christian ministry. The immediate goal is to nurture in young people ways of thinking, practices and disciplines essential to the Christian life, and to encourage youth to think theologically about contemporary issues. The long-term goal is to recruit a cadre of theologically-minded Christian youth who will become leaders in church and society.

The need and opportunity for theological programs for youth

Who will be the next generation of Christian pastors? Who will lead the church in the next millennium? When and how will these young people be recruited, called, and trained? Religious leaders from a wide range of denominations are asking these perennial questions today with renewed urgency. The answers are not clear.

Many congregational and denominational youth fellowship programs nurture young people in the Christian faith and establish personal relationships with other Christians. They do no always provide adequate opportunities for youth to explore and examine critically the long and rich tradition of Christian thought and practice. At the same time, church leaders worry that the networks and systems needed to identify and recruit talented young people into the vocation of Christian ministry are not strong enough at the present time.

How can churches encourage bright youth to consider their vocational choices and life commitments in light of Christian ministry? Lilly Endowment believes that theological schools can play a critical role in addressing this important question. Recent programs funded by Lilly Endowment, such as the Youth Theology Institute at Candler School of Theology, the Youth Discipleship Community at Claremont School of Theology and the Youth Ministry and Spirituality Project at San Francisco Theological Seminary, demonstrate that high school-aged young people are capable of asking deeply penetrating theological questions and long for opportunities to engage in sustained theological discussion about serious personal and social issues. These opportunities excite and stimulate their imaginations. Not surprisingly, many youth, as a result, have shifted their career focus and are beginning to pursue a vocation of Christian ministry. By creating theological programs for youth, theological schools are in a unique position to help youth and strengthen the future church.

Lilly Endowment has allocated more than $9 million in funding to support this new competitive grants program. The program combines the Endowment's long-standing interest in the education and formation of youth and in the development of Christian leaders. Coupled with support to other key programs, such as the reconstituted Fund for Theological Education, the program is part of the Endowment's strategy to strengthen the pastoral leadership of local congregations.

A variety of approaches and models for youth programs

The Endowment hopes to fund a variety of programs that take seriously the education and formation of youth and demonstrate a commitment to the identification and nurture of future Christian leaders. No single program or model can accomplish this task, but the programs funded through this initiative will share one or more of the following characteristics:

- Introduce youth to the major texts, theological resources and practices of the Christian tradition
- Create a setting for youth to explore the meaning and significance of the practical wisdom of the Christian faith for their own lives
- Encourage critical thinking about the Christian faith in relation to contemporary social issues and challenges
- Enable youth to explore their vocational aspirations in a context of spiritual and theological discernment and to consider Christian ministry among their options

Theological schools are not expected to carry these programs alone but are encouraged where appropriate to form partnerships with congregations, denominations, church-related colleges and/or other theological schools. These partnerships should seek to establish and/or reinforce networks and structures among multiple religious agencies and institutions to recruit and cultivate high school youth for vocations in Christian ministry.

Multiple levels of funding

Lilly Endowment recognizes that theological schools differ in their capacities to design and implement programs for high school youth. Yet the Endowment believes that it is important to encourage and support a variety of programs at a wide number of schools. Thus, the program will offer multiple levels of funding so that interested schools may have an opportunity to consider, design, and apply for a grant to construct and implement a youth program that best fits each school's distinctive situation. Four levels of funding are available:

- $1.2 million ($400,000 per year for three years)
- $450,000 ($150,000 per year)
- $150,000 ($50,000 per year)
- $30,000 ($10,000 per year)

The highest level of funding will allow schools to design and implement intensive youth programs that may include, for example, a three- or four-week residential summer academy. The lower levels of funding may, as another example, help schools adapt current programs to include high school youth or establish a new youth program in partnership with regional congregations or denominational offices. Please note: Planning grants of up to $30,000 will be available on a competitive basis to assist in the preparation of a proposal for the two highest levels of funding.

Eligibility and criteria

Every theological school in the United States and Canada that is fully accredited by The Association of Theological Schools is eligible to apply for a grant in this program. The Board of Directors of Lilly Endowment will award grants on a competitive basis to support projects that demonstrate the most promise for achieving the stated purposes of the initiative.

Although this program has no application form, a successful grant application should include all the following elements:

1. ***Program mission and purpose:*** the application should state the youth program's mission and purpose, highlighting its special and/or distinctive characteristics. These may include the institution's history and mission, resources in the city or region, and/or special opportunities available for young people.

2. ***Program design:*** the application should include an overall program design, including the program's content, format, and organization. The purpose and description of each component of the program should be clearly stated.

3. ***Outcomes of the program:*** Each applicant should state the program results for which it expects to be held accountable. In doing so, it should articulate specific goals in clear and measurable terms. It should also provide an evaluation design that describes the process by which the program's effectiveness will be assessed.

4. ***Leadership:*** Key leaders for the program should be identified and their qualifications described.

5. ***Institutional appropriateness:*** The proposal should describe how the proposed youth program fits the mission of the school and is related to its other activities, programs, and priorities.

6. ***Institutional resources:*** the proposal should describe the institutional resources available for establishing a youth program, including faculty, physical space, and opportunities of service, study and/or recreation in the geographic area.

7. ***Recruitment of youth:*** a plan for identifying and recruiting youth for the program must be fully described.

8. ***Partnerships:*** Applicants are encouraged, where appropriated, to form partnerships with other programs and institutions in designing and implementing the youth program. Potential partners should be identified and the relationship with the partner described.

9. ***Budget:*** A detailed budget for the program must be included with the application.

10. ***Plan for continuation of the youth program:*** Priority will be given to proposals that include a plan to continue the program beyond the grant period. If an institution hopes to continue the program beyond the three-year grant, a future funding plan should be included with the application.

11. ***Institutional endorsements:*** The proposal should be signed by the theological school's chief executive officer and chief financial officer. In the case of free-standing theological schools, the proposal should also be signed by the chair of the school's board; in the case of the university-related divinity schools, by the appropriate senior university administrator.

ENDNOTES

1. L. Gregory Jones, "Tale of Two T-shirts," *Christian Century*, September 7, 2004, 47.

2. Ibid.

3. Lilly Endowment Request for Proposals, 1998.

4. The name was changed later to the Youth Theological Initiative.

5. Lilly Endowment Request for Proposals, 1998.

6. Saint Francis Seminary's project asking youth to design curriculum modules needed no further funding after that task was accomplished.

7. This reflects the conclusion of the program at Saint Francis Seminary and the jointly-hosted programs of Bethel and Luther seminaries and of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.

8. Included in this figure is a grant given to Claremont for the Youth Discipleship Project, a research project on pedagogical strategies for ministry with youth directed by David F. White that concluded in 2003. The current research project at Claremont, called The Narrative Pedagogies with Youth Project, focuses on storytelling, creative writing, and drama, and is directed by Frank Rogers Jr.

9. When talking about the "twin goals," I refer specifically to the forty-six programs sponsored by forty-eight seminaries in the Theological Programs for High School Youth Initiative launched in 1998.

10. Fred Edie, Case Study from Duke Youth Academy for Christian Formation, 2003 Forum, 13. This case study and others are available on www.FTEWebBoard.org.

11. Here, and in other places where the themes, strategies, and impact are discussed, I include Candler School of Theology's program, because it is similar in its aims to the programs in the initiative launched in 1998, Theological Programs for High School Youth.

12. For example Emmanuel School of Religion works with Milligan College, Chicago Theological Seminary with Elmhurst College, Haggard School of Theology with Azusa Pacific, Interdenominational Theological Center with five colleges and universities of the Atlanta University Campus, Associated Mennonite with Goshen College (including its Lilly-funded Theological Program for the Theological Exploration of Vocation), Eastern Mennonite with Eastern Mennonite University.

13. For example, Fuller is closely connected with Young Life, North American Baptist with First Priority, Gardner-Webb with Crossroads Ministry, Lincoln with Youth for Christ.

14. Especially Newman, St. Mary's, and Catholic Theological Union.

15. Some of the projects include a significant research component as part of the design: Candler, Claremont, Garrett-Evangelical, Perkins, Gordon-Conwell and St. John's.

16. Jackson W. Carroll, Barbara G. Wheeler, Daniel O. Aleshire, Penny Long Marler, *Being There: Culture and Formation in Two Theological Schools* (New York: Oxford, 1997).

17. Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," in *American Sociological Review* 51: 273–286.

18. John Hoffmeyer, Interrogatory Theology: A Report and Reflection from Theological Education with Youth, a Ministry of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, 5–6. This paper was prepared for the 2003 Forum and is available at www.FTEWebBoard.org.

19. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969).

20. Laurent Daloz, Cheryl Keen, James Keen, and Sharon Daloz Parks, *Common Fire: Lives of Commitment in a Complex World* (Boston: Beacon Press: 1996).

21. See Kathleen Cahalan's 1999 report, A Briefing Paper on the 1998 Theological School Competitive Grants Programs for an analysis of the leadership challenges facing the church as expressed in grant proposals.

22. Lancaster Theological Seminary's 2004 Report on the Sustainability Grant.

23. This is a helpful term coined by Lilly Endowment Program Officer, Christopher Coble.

24. Trinity Lutheran Seminary's 2003 Program Report.

25. Concordia Seminary's (St. Louis) 2003 Program Report.

26. Interdenominational Theological Center's 2003 Program Report.

27. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary's 2003 Program Report.

28. Concordia Theological Seminary (Fort Wayne) 2003 Program Report.

29. David F. White, "The Long-term Influence of the Youth Theological Initiative Summer Academy on the Faith Development of High School Youth." Research report of the Youth Theological Initiative of Candler School of Theology of Emory University, 2004, 16.

30. Multnomah Bible College and Biblical Seminary's 2003 Program Report.

31. Lincoln Christian Seminary's 2003 Program Report.

32. Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education's 2003 Program Report.

33. St. John's University School of Theology–Seminary's 2003 Program Report.

34. Calvin Theological Seminary's 2003 Program Report; November 22, 2004, email from David De Boer.

35. Trinity Lutheran Seminary's 2003 Program Report.

36. Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary's 2003 Program Report.

37. Emmanuel School of Religion's 2003 Program Report.

38. Fuller Theological Seminary's 2003 Program Report.

39. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's 2003 Program Report.

40. North American Baptist Seminary's 2003 Program Report.

41. White, 12. Wade Clark Roof identifies the 18- to 25-year-old range as the peak period for dropping out of church. Similarly Barna documents that teens' religious participation, self-description as "religious," and "desire to know God" declines notably at age 18. See footnote 2 on page 247 in *Choosing Church: What Makes a Difference to Teens* by Carol E. Lytch.

42. Ibid.

43. Craig Dykstra in his address to the Forum, January 6, 2004.

44. Catholic Theological Union's 2003 Program Report.

45. Appreciative Inquiry is "a questioning process that focuses on life-giving aspects of person, organizations, and systems." 2003 Program Report of Iliff School of Theology.

46. Some theological schools had such high regard for the capacities of the youth to contribute to theological discussions they arranged for them to be among their peer

group representatives even though the peer group agenda and meeting time was not designed to accommodate them.

47. September 30–October 1, 2002, Peer Group Summary Report by Paul Philibert, facilitator.

48. Notes from Lytch visit to Calvin Theological Seminary in July 2000.

49. November 2–3, 2002, Peer Group Summary Report by Larry Graham, facilitator.

50. Notes from Lytch visit to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in July 2003.

51. Summary of November 8–9, 2004, Peer Group Meeting, by Larry Kent Graham.

52. Ibid.

53. This was the January 29, 2004, Advisory Committee Meeting of the FTE Coordination.

54. These data and figure were supplied by The Association of Theological Schools, October 24, 2004.

55. Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation, coordinated by Kim Maphis Early. See www.PTEV.org.

56. November 8–9, 2004, Peer Group Summary Report by Larry Kent Graham, facilitator.

57. September 26–27, 2002, Peer Group Summary Report by Paul Philibert, facilitator.

A Response to the Summary Report on Theological Programs for High School Youth

Malcolm Warford
Lexington Theological Seminary

In recent years, Lilly Endowment Inc. has increasingly committed its resources to the renewal of religious life at all levels. It has been a source of hope in a church landscape littered with debris from the coming apart of an ecology of institutions—congregations, denominations, families, colleges, and seminaries—that once knit together familiar patterns of ecclesial and cultural life. In struggling with the question of where funding could best leverage change to strengthen communities of faith, Lilly Endowment has taken the long view and tried to encourage projects that could address fundamental issues of the present and future church, especially future pastoral leadership. This emphasis has led especially to the kind of grant program described by Carol E. Lytch in *Summary Report I: Strategic Advances in Theological Education: Theological Programs for High School Youth, 1999–2004*. Lytch's *Summary Report* is detailed and insightful in its interpretation of what occurred in these programs, and I will not attempt to duplicate what she has already done so superbly. Rather, I would like to share what her report and the programs she describes raise for me regarding youth, vocational issues, and theological education.

The invitation to respond to the *Summary Report* came while I happened to be reading Jonathan Franzen's memoir, *The Discomfort Zone: A Personal History*.[1] In particular, I was looking at the chapter that focused on his experiences in a church high school youth group. I would like to begin with his depiction of that youth group because it raises the kinds of issues that formed the need for the youth initiative itself. In this chapter, "Then Joy Breaks Through," Franzen relates what it was like for him in the early 1970s to be a member of the Senior High Youth Fellowship at the First Congregational Church, UCC, in Webster Groves, Missouri. When I had first seen a version of this chapter as an essay in the *New Yorker* magazine, I recognized the author as a writer whose novels are sharp, edgy, and richly textured narratives of contemporary life, so I was curious as to what he had to say. Also, I was interested in the article because our family lived in St. Louis and belonged to the church in those years when Jonathan Franzen was in the youth group, though I did not know him or his family.

In his look back on the church youth group, Franzen is surprised by his growing involvement in the group and his regard for, and somewhat wariness of, the church's Associate Minister, Bob Mutton, who was responsible for the youth program. "He looked scarily like Jesus," Franzen writes, "not the Renaissance Jesus, with the long Hellenic nose, but the more tormented Jesus of the northern Gothic."[2] He was "part Godfather and part Sorcerer's Apprentice."[3] Franzen attends the youth group regularly and pays close attention to

what is going on. Most of all, he wants to fit in. In particular, he watches Bob Mutton. He is intrigued by the kinds of questions that he raises and the ways in which Mutton quietly preaches the Gospel and practices his own brand of psychotherapy and counterculturalism. At the same time, Franzen cultivates a kind of adolescent insouciance that permits him to be both a participant in and an observer of the group itself.

It is significant that Franzen cared enough to retrace his high school experiences and to reflect upon them in detail and with such obvious feeling, and it is equally significant to me that the *New Yorker* would publish this essay whose subject must have struck a few of the magazine's editors as a bit parochial—as in "is this really our kind of thing?" Evidently it was to someone's liking, and I would prefer to believe that that someone recognized that Franzen was describing one of the most profound experiences of youth. The only other writers that come to mind who have ventured into these waters are the early stories of John Updike and the novels of Douglas Coupland, the so-called Generation X writer.

It is not clear, however, from Franzen's essay how much his thoughts about God moved beyond a vague feeling to something more concrete and relevant for his life. What he fretted about mostly was his standing in the group. Along the way, Franzen recognizes that while the fellowship is a kinder version of high school life, it still expressed finally the same values that claimed youth culture in general. The popular kids in school were almost always the popular kids in the fellowship group. The difference was that the fellowship group at least had some room for others who never stood a chance in the corridors of Webster High, and Jonathan Franzen was one of those who made it in.

There is not much, if anything, in Franzen's memoir about his actual growth in his knowledge of God or his own faithfulness. He does not reveal whether his experience in the group led him to be confirmed in the church. Nothing is said, for example, about the credos that youth wrote and read in church as they were accepted into membership. In thinking back to those occasions, I remember feeling, as I heard young people reading their credos, that while these were sometimes moving statements of personal searching, they seldom said much about the Gospel and the Christian life. They were rites of passage but not exactly moments of confirmation in a tradition of faith—joining the body of Christ. Nevertheless, what Jonathan Franzen shows is the importance of youth as a time of searching, or better, a time of framing questions that matter. While those of us who have been involved in youth ministry may wish we could have been better at drawing relationships between this searching and the content of the Christian faith, there is still the recognition that the church provided a community where important things could occur—a chance for young people to think about the kind of people they want to be and the kind of work they want to do. Here and there, churches, such as First Congregational, UCC, have done this. The aim is to do it better and with more theological and vocational depth.

Lilly Endowment has recognized all of this in launching the youth initiative. The Endowment's expectations have been affirmed in the imaginative projects envisioned and implemented by the forty-five institutions that were

part of the grant program. Over and over again, Carol Lytch points to projects that have engaged young people at significant levels and have helped them grasp the nature of faith, learn basic practices of faith, and explore the vocation of pastoral leadership. At the same time, those who taught youth found their students to be teachers as well, and testimony is given as to how theologians and leaders were touched and changed by their experiences.

In the protocols describing "Theological Programs for High School Youth," the Endowment staff made two aims explicit: "(1) stimulate and nurture an excitement about theological learning and inquiry and (2) identify and encourage a new generation of young Christians to consider vocations in Christian ministry." This grant language is careful, provocative, and experiential. In fact, it corresponds with my own experience as a young person in the 1950s when the ecology of ecclesial life was still somewhat intact. I remember well the "excitement about theological learning and inquiry" that was at the center of the youth group of which I was a part. It was here that I saw ministers helping me think about the nature of faith and seeing and feeling first hand what it was like to engage the mind and the heart in conversations about the Gospel. And, it was in that same youth group and in summer camps and conferences as well, that I first felt the stirring of a sense of calling to pastoral ministry and to theological teaching. Summer camp evenings that closed with candlelight circles sometimes ended in shallow piety, but they also held the promise of expressing a profound sense of God, ourselves, and the world we were called to serve. The new high school youth programs that Lilly has supported are, in many places, the return of some old things—true things—that have been made contemporary. To this extent, the projects have enabled congregations, denominations, and theological schools to reclaim what they have left behind and to envision new possibilities coming into view.

When I was a minister in suburban New York City during the late 1960s, the youth group was composed of more than a hundred youth from across the community. It was a lively and energetic group of youth and the adults who were their companions and coaches. Into this setting came a so-called youth specialist who explained to us that the youth group model was now out of date and what we should do was to "get into the streets" and "go where the action is"—which, of course, implied that we were nowhere near that action at the moment. In fact, many youth groups across the country waned in the 1970s and 1980s though there continued to be groups such as Jonathan Franzen's fellowship group at First Congregational that kept moving along.

Youth groups in this era tended to swing between a psychological approach and a political one. This followed the ups and downs of the culture itself as young people were both in the streets and in their own self-absorbed journeys. The irony was how this could be a time focused so outwardly to issues of justice, peace, and equality and at the same time an era of heightened narcissism and withdrawal into drugs and dropping-out.

The turning toward psychological definitions of youth ministry tended to set the general trend. The center became the adolescent's search for identity, understood essentially in psychological terms often to the exclusion of theological thought and practice. Many leaders saw the youth program as enabling

the "journey to adulthood," but they were not as perceptive in seeing how this journey could be informed more explicitly by the commitments of the Gospel, which differed at significant points from the best ideals of middle class America. We all struggled with these questions, and important issues were recognized in a new appreciation of the nature of adolescence, the dynamics of culture, and the church as a hospitable setting. What we did not do so well was to be more specific about how the distinctive language and practice of the Christian community informed this human development. In this regard, Eugene Peterson, in *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness,* once suggested that an essential role of the ordained minister as a teacher in the church is to "say the word *God* accurately." He did not mean articulation in a narrow, restrictive sense; instead, I think he was trying to convey that the pastor's primary teaching office is to give substance to what too often is a random and subjective feeling tangled as much with ego as with the deeper self that God reveals. Being with men and women in this basic reality of their lives requires the pastor to say "God" personally, as well as accurately. This brings pastors, he claims, "alongside our parishioners in the actual circumstances of their lives." In this context, it is evident that many church youth leaders did not pay enough attention to theological teaching and learning directed toward helping young people understand the distinctiveness of the Christian life as something more than what "any good person should be and do."[4]

Despite the fact that we did not quite get it right in youth ministry, one of the things I have observed in theological education is the extent to which the entry of many older persons into seminary was influenced by earlier experiences in youth groups. Coming to seminary was for many of them a return to a place in their lives that they had left behind but now picked up again. In particular, as young adults, they had deferred the vocational possibility of pastoral ministry that first surfaced for them in church youth fellowship groups. At the time, they did not act on the idea either because they were not certain about it themselves or because no minister or leader had encouraged them. In a sense, then, this cohort of older seminarians embodied the surplus value of earlier youth group experiences. When this group came and went in theological education, it was one of the reasons it became more difficult to recruit students. While seminary student bodies became more diverse in regard to gender and race, younger students were less and less visible. Now, however, young people in increasing numbers are joining older men and women in theological education. This change is occurring especially at schools participating in the youth initiative.

One important impact of the Lilly youth programs has been the evidence that participating theological seminaries have seen an increase in the number of younger students. According to a recent ATS analysis, schools that received youth grants reported that 44 percent of their student bodies were in their twenties, while the ATS average was 42 percent. This may not be a huge differential, but it is, perhaps, indicative of a growing trend among these grant schools. A number of young people involved in the Lilly projects have sensed a call to ministry and pursued theological study. Moreover, it may be that the

schools' participation in the program has enabled them to be more inviting and responsive to the identification and recruitment of younger people.

What Lilly Endowment has done is to point seminaries to the real sources of the applicant pool—the life of the church in its most basic and persisting forms. If we want leaders for the church, pastors, and theological teachers, we have to nurture young people as they envision their lives and make the basic commitments of schooling and work. This is central to the Endowment's theological program for high school youth.

The Endowment staff took an imaginative leap in its hopes for a renewed ministry with young people. This leap was the conviction that theological seminaries might be a setting where theological teachers can provide the kind of substantive teaching that makes a difference and the schools themselves can be places of learning for youth. At the same time, the Endowment staff was quite aware that if theological schools responded to the call to participate in this program to "stimulate and nurture an excitement about theological learning and inquiry," then the schools themselves, or at least the participating faculty members, could be changed by the experience. The testimonies of many teachers suggest that this has been true. Theological teachers have been touched by their involvement. While schools obviously have had differing levels at which the everyday life of the institution has been transformed by their involvement in the youth projects, schools have owned the project in significant ways. Having young people on their campuses, working with faculty, and engaged with school leaders brought a new and, perhaps, renewing presence into academic communities that have not had much contact with younger people. In fact, I have a hunch that schools participating in the youth initiative found models of engagement that are applicable to other constituencies and publics as well. It is easy for theological schools to become isolated. We are off the mainline of attention; few people have ever stepped foot on our campuses; and it is not insignificant that one of the most common slips of the tongue is for people to substitute "cemetery" for "seminary." So, the question becomes how do schools become alive to the kinds of partnerships with denominations and local congregations that constructively engage the issues that so often overwhelm us? The answer is found as schools reach out, form collaborative ventures, and expand their own horizons to engage new tasks that bring with them new possibilities.

The *Summary Report* concludes with Carol Lytch's reflections on several questions for theological education: First, she raises the query "What have we learned about the kind of change that theological schools can accomplish?" She suggests that "with these new programs, theological schools have stepped into the role of providing programming for the church" and moved beyond seminaries' traditional role as "intellectual centers of their traditions." This conclusion corresponds with other evidence that new programmatic functions are more and more defining the nature of theological schools. The good news this provides is the way in which new programs that try directly to meet the needs of the church bring seminaries into relationship with other agencies of the church's life and take on tasks no longer provided for in denominational structures. The not so good news that accompanies this development is wheth-

er many seminaries that are already inadequately funded and understaffed can sustain this kind of initiative in the face of a growing list of direct service programs that call on already stretched institutional and faculty resources. This is not so great a problem for well endowed or denominationally financed seminaries, but it is a significant issue for other schools. So, predictably, the complex, though not unsolvable, issue is what happens to programs like the youth initiative when grant funding ends and the institution must assume fiscal responsibility for this kind of institutional commitment?

Second, Carol Lytch asks, "What is the proper role of theological education in the identification and recruitment of pastoral leaders?" As she indicates, theological schools have generally seen themselves as receivers of future leaders of the church. Seminaries have assumed that the responsibility for identifying and recruiting the pastoral leadership of the church resided with the church itself. Given the current changes in denominational structures and other agencies of the church, the seminary is required to take a more active role. In particular, this calls for a new consciousness within theological schools that recognizes that pastoral leaders "don't grow on trees." They grow out of the life of the church, and the theological community is invited to be part of churchwide efforts to support youth in their calling to the church's ministries. Schools participating in the youth initiative indicate they know how to take on this responsibility.

Carol Lytch's third summary question is, "How does theological education fit into the larger landscape and ecology of institutions that nurture youth and develop church leadership?" This, of course, is the essential question because it goes to the heart of how a new ecology of institutions might be sustained. At many different levels, Lilly Endowment has made it possible for some new things to happen; the question for us is how will these new ventures be sustained as integral to what we do? As I have said earlier, this is a tough issue for schools that might like to do a lot of things but simply do not have the resources to do them or do them as well as they could with adequate funding. The collapse of many denominational structures has left essential tasks unattended. One sign of this is the way in which job titles keep expanding as programs shut down and offices close. Remaining denominational staffs at headquarters where cuts have been made find themselves carrying immense expectations. This is the reality that urges theological seminaries to do what they can to make up for the gaps now looming so large.

The essential issue for seminaries is how they monitor their own life in such a way that they are clear about what they can and cannot do. For some, new commitments are tacked on to what already is happening on campus. Room is made for new programs, but this accommodation mode is inadequate to the task. Instead, seminaries need to realize that new programs and new constituencies actually necessitate a willingness on the part of the institution to be transformed as well. The essential theological and vocational issue for theological schools is how to discern and shape the nature of this transformation in light of the vision and mission out of which the school was formed and is sustained. The fact is that the "new realities" of church life are not inconveniences or incursions on what we do; instead, they are the occasions that

call us to perceive what God is now calling us to be—a new thing that has the capacity to transform our life.

Finally, the "excitement about theological learning and inquiry" that was hoped for in the original design of the Lilly program comes out of the recognition that Christian thought is a way of being, especially a way of engaging the struggle for peace and justice in practices of faith that witness to the Gospel. As one observer in the Summary Report suggests, "Students may not think their way into new ways of living, but they may live their way into new forms of thinking." In this regard, all of us can be grateful for the high school youth initiative and for the promise it represents in the life of the church and theological education.

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ENDNOTES

1. Jonathan Franzen, *The Discomfort Zone: A Personal History* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006). The title of the chapter, "Then Joy Breaks Through," is the name of a book by George Benson, *Then Joy Breaks Through* (New York: Seabury, 1974) whose psychological perspective influenced the youth minister and his leadership of the youth group in Webster Groves.

2. Ibid., 58.

3. Ibid., 68.

4. Eugene Peterson, *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 172.

Summary Report II
Strengthening Congregational Ministry: A Report on a Program to Enhance Theological Schools' Capacities to Prepare Candidates for Congregational Ministry, 1999–2003

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> *"I love being a minister. Even when the ministry is hard, it's more fun than any other job I can imagine. Where else can you preach, teach, meet with a local abatement specialist, and get arrested for civil disobedience all in the same week? Where else can you be invited into the living rooms of new mothers and into the hospice rooms of the dying and find hope in both places? I do love being a minister. I love the agility it calls forth in me and the chaos that only Jesus could organize into a calling."*
>
> Lillian Daniel

Introduction: Program overview

Lillian Daniel, senior minister at First Congregational Church, Glen Ellyn, Illinois, captures what is beautiful, ordinary, and holy about congregational ministry in this one brief description. I love to listen to pastors like Lillian talk about ministry. She's the kind of storyteller that I want to keep listening to, the kind of preacher I want to be inspired by, the kind of minister I want at my bedside when I need comfort. How do ministers like Lillian find their way to serving in congregations, what makes them good at what they do, how are they formed to be spiritual leaders, what do they need to know to lead a congregation, and why do they stay in congregational ministry when it is increasingly demanding and underappreciated in our times?

The story of the Congregational Ministry Program, funded in 1998 by Lilly Endowment, Inc., is about ministers like Lillian and congregations like First Congregational Church. The story is also about the relationship of congregational ministers to theological educators, or, more precisely, the relationship between what Lillian does as a minister and what I do as a theological educator. What is it that I do in my place of ministry, the seminary, that awakens a love for ministry, a deep commitment to the people of God, a sound theological mind, an ability to preach, teach, take care of buildings, and be a prophetic word of hope? How do theological educators encourage such agility, imagination, and faithfulness?

In 2003, the Endowment invited me to write a summary analysis of what has been accomplished and learned through the forty-five grant projects. I have enjoyed three unique vantage points over the past five years, which makes me more than a casual observer of the program. I prepared, at the invitation of the Endowment, an analysis of the grant applications, "A Briefing Paper on the

1998 Theological School Competitive Grants Programs"; I helped to educate grantees on how to conduct a project evaluation; and, I currently teach in one of the schools that received a grant.

Rather than report on what each school accomplished, I have examined the work of each school in light of three overarching questions. First: What has been learned about the particular strategies taken up by grantees, namely student recruitment, contextual education, spiritual formation, lay ministry, distance learning, support for pastors in ministry, and partnerships with congregations and denominations? Second: In what ways have theological schools made strategic advances to improve their institution's capacity to better prepare the next generation of congregational and parish ministers? And, third: What is the place of theological education in the larger landscape and ecology of the churches' efforts to promote and develop strong pastoral leaders? In other words, what kinds of partnerships make the most difference?

To prepare this report, I reviewed the original grant proposals and thoroughly read grantee program reports, especially the final reports, most of which were prepared in 2003. I also conducted telephone interviews with twenty presidents and deans and fourteen project directors. Several shared materials from their grant projects, which allowed me to see the breadth and depth of their work. What becomes immediately clear is that every seminary cares that its students have the ability to be excellent leaders in strong congregations that make a difference in the lives of members as well as their communities. What is most exciting about what I have to report is that every seminary knows pastors like Rev. Daniel and succeeded on many fronts in working to connect to congregations like hers. I hope my summary and analysis give due credit to the enormous commitment, hard work, and courage to risk and experiment that are part of the story of these schools. Before turning to the program findings, it is important to first understand who the grantees are, what seminaries thought at the outset of the program about the challenges they faced in educating students for congregational ministry, and the strategies they designed to strengthen their capacity to better prepare pastoral leaders.

Profile of the Congregational Ministry Program

Lilly Endowment Inc. has supported theological schools and related institutions that have as their mission the education of Christian ministers and pastors for several decades.[2] For the past twenty years, the Endowment has funded most of the research in the area of congregational studies.[3] In the 1990s, the foundation made a commitment to strengthening pastoral ministry in congregations and in 1998 Lilly Endowment invited theological schools to be partners in its pastoral leadership development initiative. The Endowment invited all schools in The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States and Canada to consider how they might improve education for congregational ministry. A request for proposals was sent to 202 accredited schools. Seminaries could apply for up to $1.5 million in grant funds for five years. The Endowment received 108 proposals, forty-five of which were funded, totaling $53.4 million in grants. The Endowment awarded grants to schools that could make "a strategic advance to improve their institution's capacity to better prepare the next generation of congregational or parish ministers."

Strengthening Congregational Ministry Grants

Mainline Denominational	27
Roman Catholic	9
Evangelical Denominational	4
Evangelical Independent	3
Mainline Independent	1
Peace Church	1
TOTAL	45

The largest number of grants (60 percent) was awarded to mainline denominational schools in the United States.[4] Nearly half of all mainline denominational schools applied, and four denominations had particularly high application rates (seven out of eight schools sponsored by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America schools, twelve out of twelve United Methodist, eight out of nine Presbyterian Church (USA) schools, and five out of six United Church of Christ schools applied). Twenty-seven mainline denominational schools in the United States were awarded grants, with the ELCA, UMC and UCC accounting for fifteen grants (33 percent of the total grants).

The second-largest group to receive grants was Roman Catholic schools (20 percent). Among the Roman Catholic schools eligible to apply, 42 percent applied and of them nearly half were awarded grants. Evangelical schools accounted for 16 percent of the grants, four denominational and three independent schools received support. One each of the mainline independent and peace church seminaries received grants. It should also be noted that of the total, three schools are predominantly African-American and two schools are located in Canada. Five grants were given to seminaries that are the only, or one of two, seminaries in their denomination.[5]

Understandings of congregational ministry and theological education in 1998

What can seminaries do to build their capacity to better prepare congregational ministers? Lilly Endowment asked theological schools a broad question and gave them the freedom to craft an answer to that question that best fit their ecclesial and educational situation. In their applications seminaries were asked to describe the state of congregational ministry among their constituents. Four distinct story lines emerge from each of the main groups in the program along with several common issues that all seminaries face together.

The first story is told by mainline denominational seminaries, and it is the story about the gap between the seminary and the congregation and the seminary and the denomination. The relative isolation of ecclesial institutions from each other has led to a breakdown in the mainline system that has had serious repercussions for seminaries. Mainline Protestant seminaries have found

it increasingly difficult to recruit students, as the feeder-system—the process of selecting and forming ministerial candidates—has virtually disappeared in many mainline settings and few congregations see it as their role to encourage and call people, especially young people, to ministry. Most denomination-based feeder systems for seminaries, such as schools, camps, youth organizations, colleges, and congregations, are no longer linked in ways that cultivate new generations of pastoral leaders. The network of denomination-sponsored institutions once nurtured young people by means of a series of programs and activities. Adults invited young people to consider the ministry and lent guidance and support through their years of vocational exploration. While these institutions may still stand, they work in relative isolation from each other and rarely claim church leadership development as among their respective or shared priorities. The mainline Protestant story is deeply involved with building closer relationships among various institutions—seminaries, congregations, and denominations—for the purpose of recruiting, placing and supporting ministers.

The Roman Catholic story is a bit different, though many Catholic schools share the mainline Protestant concern for the loss of a feeder system that once promoted ordained ministry as a viable option for young men. The prevailing concern of Catholic schools now is how to prepare lay people for ministry, how to understand theologically the phenomenon of the lay minister, and how to prepare congregations and church leaders to accept lay people as ministers. The Catholic Church is witnessing the rise of a new professional class in parish ministry—the nonordained, professionally trained person who requires education and formation for ministry, yet whose role and work is not entirely the same as the priest's.

Catholic lay ministers are now employed in a wide variety of church jobs: as pastoral associates in parishes, as diocesan-level administrative posts, and as leaders of specific congregational ministries (e.g., liturgy, music, religious education, pastoral care), often in large parishes that were once served by women religious. Seminaries have been the likely place to turn for the training of lay ministers, but it is a new task for Catholic seminaries, which until very recently trained only ordained candidates. Behind this pressing concern, of course, is the stark decline in the number of ordained candidates for priesthood, the rising age of priests, the number of parishes without a resident priest, and the loss and decline of large numbers of women religious who served local ministries for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Catholic grantees chose overwhelmingly to put their energy and focus into designing ministry education and spiritual formation programs for lay students at the graduate level.

Evangelical seminaries articulate two main concerns. The first is about the quality and character of people entering ministry. Evangelical seminaries want to find the best people for ministry and to recruit those with the strongest leadership potential to do congregational ministry well. Too many ministers don't succeed, or don't stay in ministry, which is devastating for congregational growth and vitality. The second concern voiced by evangelical leaders has to do with the changing character of congregational life. How can the

seminary train people to understand congregations in all their complexity and to help ministers articulate a sense of the congregation's mission in communities that are constantly changing?

Several schools participating in the grants program are the only seminary in their denomination or are one of two schools (e.g., Moravian, Mennonite, African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and Orthodox schools). The denomination might be small compared to larger mainline Protestant bodies or Catholics, but in many cases a single school must address the denomination's needs for high quality ministers on its own and thereby is among the denomination's most important institutions. The challenge facing these schools is not so much a gap between the seminary and the denomination as it is the demands of an ever-changing denomination that is spreading in different parts of the country and hemisphere. How can one or two seminaries serve diverse congregational settings? How can the seminary stretch beyond its walls to train ministers who cannot move to the seminary for full-time studies and to provide services to ministers and congregations?

Seminaries across the major Christian families have distinctive pressures and challenges. But seminaries also have a great deal in common as graduate schools for ministry, and in 1998 schools described several challenges they face together: changes in the student body over the past twenty-five years; the gap between seminary education and the realities of congregational ministry; providing education to students off campus, and supporting graduates as they move into full-time employment.

Nearly all grantees at the outset voiced a concern about the quality of candidates they accept. Schools admit that many of the students they are accepting into the Masters of Divinity (MDiv) program are not likely to be strong candidates for ministry, but because of financial constraints, they accept nearly all applicants. In addition to changes in the overall academic quality of students, seminaries have seen dramatic changes in their student bodies over the past twenty years. Forty is the average age of the student body on many campuses; many students are pursuing second, and sometimes, third careers; an increasing number are studying part time while working; and some students are not well-formed in the denomination or its tradition.

Older students bring maturity and experience to seminary as well as a clear sense of their vocation, a vocation that probably was discouraged when they were younger. The fact that they are older, however, presents a challenge to church leaders: they will serve a shorter period of time in the congregation and increase the number of ministers over age 50 in what is an already-graying profession. Older students can be less likely to relocate to attend a denominational seminary because of family and employment, and, therefore, seek seminary education at a school nearby. One positive outcome is that many Protestant seminaries are more ecumenical and now work with a variety of denominations to ensure that candidacy requirements can be fulfilled.

Seminaries have never defined older students as the problem. The problem many now realize is that the seminary forgot or failed to actively and intentionally recruit candidates for ministry who are college-age or in their mid-

20s. While the number of older students has steadily increased, the number of first-career students and recent college graduates has steadily decreased. Many schools reported that recent college graduates constitute the smallest group on campus and young adults and high school-age youth are rarely invited or encouraged to consider ministry as a vocation.

Many would-be ministers cannot afford to attend school full time. Part-time graduate studies are not viewed as an ideal situation either for the school, which remains financially viable with full-time students, or the student, who faces financial repercussions for part-time status. Students who attend school part time and work part time will end up spending more money for their education, accumulating more student loans, and earning less income. Part-time students change the dynamics of campus life because there are fewer students participating in school-sponsored activities. Part-time and older students have changed the ecology of several denominational seminaries, placing greater demands on seminaries to serve a student body with diverse educational and ecclesial needs.

In addition to the gap between the seminary and the churches on the issue of recruitment, many seminaries agreed that a gap exists between the realities of congregational ministry and education for congregational ministry. Many seminaries face a credibility gap with congregations. Evangelical seminaries face the challenge from those who think graduate education is unnecessary, irrelevant, and at times harmful. Why can't congregations train their own leaders? Academic ethos, shaped largely by theology, Bible, and history guilds, is far more influential in the curriculum design and content of seminary education than is ethos of the congregation. Mainline Protestant seminaries face a similar credibility gap with their congregations. They often hear the complaint that the seminary places greater emphasis on acquiring knowledge through academic study than on acquiring leadership skills. Catholic seminaries face a gap in perception about what is happening with regard to lay ministers: many pastors are willing to ask parish volunteers who have no theological training to lead programs. Seminaries increasingly want to provide lay ministers with graduate-level education, but many parishes seem not to realize that ministry constitutes a profession for the lay leader.

An overview of the schools' strategies

Based on the analysis of their situation, it is not surprising what strategies seminaries chose to pursue in the Congregational Ministry Program. Two main strategies emerged to enhance schools' capacities to prepare congregational ministers: student-recruitment efforts and revising or enhancing the MDiv curriculum. Further, most grant projects contained several efforts in addition to recruitment and curriculum efforts, most notably developing distance-education programs and continuing-education efforts for pastors in ministry. Schools also sought support for seminary infrastructure such as the development office, capital improvements, new centers, new staff positions, and computer and network technology. Because of the size of the grants, most schools' strategies contained multiple projects.

	GRANT ACTIVITY		TOTAL
	Main	Secondary	
Curriculum Enhancement			
Contextual Education	15	2	17
New Faculty	2	15	17
Collaboration with Denomination	0	14	14
Faculty Development	0	13	13
Spiritual Formation	2	10	12
Lay Ministry	7	2	9
Subtotal	**26**	**56**	
Student Recruitment			
Student Aid/Scholarships	3	14	17
Collaboration with Denomination	6	6	12
Subtotal	**9**	**20**	
Seminary Infrastructure			
New Staff Positions	0	31	31
Research/Publications	1	17	18
Development Office	1	13	14
Capital Improvements	0	8	8
New Centers	1	6	7
Strategic Planning	1	0	1
Satellite Campus	1	0	1
Subtotal	**5**	**79**	
Technology			
Computers/Networks	0	22	22
Distance Learning	2	11	13
Subtotal	**2**	**33**	
Supporting Ministers			
Continuing Education	1	16	17
Transition into Ministry	2	9	11
Subtotal	**3**	**25**	

Nearly two-thirds of the Congregational Ministry Program grantees sought to work on some aspect of student recruitment. It was increasingly obvious to seminaries that the ministry needs nothing less than a full-blown public-relations campaign—in every denomination. The ideal applicant pool for most seminaries includes high-quality candidates regardless of age with a diversity of ethnic representation, but it would also welcome a diversity of age groups studying full-time together. "High quality" translates into two

characteristics: excellent academic skills for successful graduate studies and emerging leadership capacities that can be formed into the requisite skills for ministry. Seminaries generally know that they need to recruit more students, but they are also aware of the fact that by accepting only higher ranking students, they would likely enroll fewer students, thereby placing themselves in a vulnerable financial situation.

Financial support for students was a key recruitment strategy. Student aid included special scholarship programs for academically excellent candidates (full tuition plus stipend to encourage full-time study); stipends for students completing field-education requirements, especially for students who must give up paid employment to fulfill this requirement, or stipends for serving in a multicultural congregation that cannot afford to pay the student; and tuition support for ethnic candidates.

About one quarter of the schools, mostly mainline denominational schools, sought to create aggressive recruitment programs that included collaboration with congregations, colleges and universities, and denominational offices to promote ministry as a vocation. A revitalized feeder system would begin with congregations that recognize their role in promoting a theological understanding of Christian vocation for all congregants and encourage those with a call to ministry to pursue formal training. A rebuilt feeder system for seminaries would bridge the gap with colleges and universities as well as camps, denominational youth initiatives, and para-church organizations.

Another way seminaries sought to address the credibility gap is by stepping closer to the congregation. Such a move involves three steps. First, seminaries sought to strengthen their focus on congregations through research about congregations and by hiring new faculty in under-developed curriculum areas such as congregational studies, worship, church leadership, and practical theology. Second, they sought to use the congregation more effectively as a setting for ministry education in contextual education programs that moved beyond traditional models of field education in which students went off to the congregation on their own to be supervised by a pastor. Finally, the seminary wanted to be seen as relevant to the concerns and demands of congregations. The majority of contextual education projects were undertaken at mainline Protestant schools, mostly ELCA and United Methodist schools.

In addition to contextual education and new faculty, eight schools sought to create or revise lay ministry programs and twelve schools developed spiritual formation programs for MDiv students. An increasing number of lay people in Protestant churches are seeking ministerial education in order to serve the local congregation in places where a full-time ordained minister is not employed. Catholic seminaries sought to revise the traditional MDiv degree for ordination candidates into a MDiv degree for lay students; they also wanted to develop spiritual formation programs that complement their programs for ordained candidates.

Plans for initiating or revising spiritual formation emerged as an important strategy for both Catholic and Protestant schools, in part because The Association of Theological Schools in 1996 included it as a criterion for accreditation. A minister's personal religious faith and practice are recognized

as fundamental to successful long-term ministry, but intentional spiritual formation is lacking in many seminaries. Several Protestant applicants recounted that their graduates have reported to them that the seminary did not sufficiently help them to form daily spiritual disciplines that would support them in the ministry. The lack of such personal practice is seen my many pastors as a major cause for burnout.

Many schools requested funds to support two levels of instructional technology: basic support for computers or networked systems and technology for distance learning. Most seminaries seeking to use distance-learning technology were doing so in order to enhance their core program, not to replace the traditional classroom setting. In fact, some argued that through video-teleconferencing technology the face-to-face interaction between teacher and students and among students is retained. Seminaries are trying to reach particular populations of students through distance education courses: pastors who are already serving in ministry and whose denomination does not require an MDiv for ordination, and students who live at considerable distance from the seminary, often in rural areas, and who cannot relocate to the seminary (often this scenario involves denominations with only one or two seminaries).

Many seminaries acknowledged that the three-year MDiv degree as currently structured is inadequate for preparing congregational ministers. When their graduates were asked what was lacking in their seminary education, the majority of pastors replied, "training in practical skills." Further, many noted that newly graduated pastors find the transition from seminary into full-time ministry quite difficult. One third of the schools included a project on continuing education, and nine schools sought to offer support to newly ordained candidates.

In the intervening five years, school and project leaders made important advances in the projects they outlined. New employees were hired, plans revised, evaluations conducted, and funding sought to sustain the work beyond the program's conclusion in 2003. There is a great deal to be told about the projects and I hope in this report to share some of most important findings that schools have reported.

Part One: Congregational Ministry Program findings

Recruitment strategies

Typically young people are not encouraged to consider ministry by the key people who influence their career path. Parents, college professors, campus ministers, friends, counselors and pastors do little to encourage people to listen for a call to ministry or to help a person begin exploring what a call to ministry would entail—and even further, what education for church ministry is about. Many people who sense they have a call to the ministry have been left to figure out on their own how to turn a call into a vocation and a vocation into service. Perhaps many calls go unheeded because it is so difficult for people, young adults and mid-career people alike, to navigate their way into and through ecclesial structures. What does the college junior or senior or young adult in his or her mid-20s know about local church leadership and

the church's educational requirements for entering the ministry? Without a familial, ecclesial, and educational culture that holds forth pastoral ministry as a viable option for those with the gifts to serve, seminaries have found it more and more difficult to recruit younger candidates, brighter candidates, and candidates from ethnic and underrepresented communities.

But the problem also lies with seminaries. In many cases, seminaries have developed the habit of welcoming only candidates that come *to* the seminary, often accepting all who apply, rather than *going out* and actively recruiting candidates. Seminaries too have largely ignored or forgotten how to help people find their way to their door.

Efforts by Congregational Ministry Program grantees demonstrate that ecclesial cultures can change and that seminaries can increase the number of applications through a variety of recruitment activities. With sustained steady effort, recruiting is not impossible: seminaries are able to increase enrollment with younger and more qualified candidates when they are intentional and proactive. The primary, and most obvious, means for increasing the quality of students is to offer scholarships, and several schools have succeeded on that front. But other options were tested with important results for all seminaries to note: some schools chose to develop programs and partnerships around recruitment by hosting exploratory events, while others developed new publications and resources for congregations and denominations that emphasize the call to ministry.

Scholarships. In most cases, full-time scholarships for high academic achievement yielded impressive results. Smart students bring a quality of thinking to the classroom and become leaders on campus, thereby improving the quality of life for all students and creating a different kind of academic community. For example, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary offered twelve students merit scholarships each year. The students not only elevated the school's academic performance but also exhibited leadership on campus by serving as ambassadors for the seminary. About half of the scholarship students engaged in cross-cultural experiences. The program's success has led the seminary to increase the scholarships to three years and the number of scholarships to fourteen a year.

Offering scholarships allows schools not only to encourage brighter candidates to apply, but it allows students to attend school full time, which decreases the time and expense of part-time studies. Seminary education is often delayed or forgotten when prospective students add the cost of graduate studies to their undergraduate debt and look ahead to the prospects of a low-paying job after graduation—the math is a stark reminder that ministry entails a form of sacrifice unlike many other careers.

However, offering full-time scholarship support is not without its challenges, as some schools learned. The goal to increase the number of ethnic candidates through scholarship support proved unattainable for a variety of complicated reasons. Many candidates simply lack the eligibility requirements for graduate study, including an undergraduate degree. But to the surprise of many recruiters, the candidates simply could not be found. It was assumed that a pool of ethnic candidates were waiting to enter seminary education if

only the financial means were available to them, but it now appears that money is not the only barrier. Some ethnic ministers find denomination-sponsored ministry formation programs more amenable to their personal, family and financial situation, especially when they are taught in a native language, such as Spanish or Korean.

A few schools were surprised to find that retention was an issue for students on full scholarship, particularly scholarships targeted toward specific populations. For example, Aquinas Institute of Theology found that some recipients of its Millennial Generation scholarships were not ready to assume full-time study and make the necessary commitment to a life serving in ministry. Aquinas recruited five Millennium Generation scholars a year over three years: four students dropped out of the program, two changed programs, and one extended his/her program beyond three years. Nearly half did not complete the MDiv degree in the three-year period. Aquinas determined that some young candidates come to seminary in order to discern whether they have a call to ministry rather than arriving with a strong sense that ministry is their vocation.

Similarly, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary designed a scholarship program for pastors to serve congregations in New England, a region the seminary has determined is in dire need of full-time pastors. But admissions staff found it difficult to recruit students to commit to serving in New England after graduation and those that did receive the scholarship had a difficult time engaging in the extra programming the seminary planned around ministry in the northeast. Gordon-Conwell planned to give twenty-five $4,000 scholarships per year, for a total of seventy-five over three years. Due to student attrition, 129 students received the scholarship, thirty graduated and forty-nine are currently enrolled. Of the graduates, fifteen are serving in ministry, seven have not found positions. About 37 percent dropped out of the scholarship program, either leaving the seminary altogether or enrolling in part-time studies. The seminary experimented with part-time scholarships but found it did not increase students' course-load. Financial support for full- or part-time study could not always retain students because of the pressures of jobs, often in ministry, and family responsibilities.

Finding partners to promote the call to ministry. Many seminaries realize that they cannot recruit students on their own and that issues of recruitment, training, and placement must be identified as a priority by the entire church. As noted in Part One, many denominations have faced a breakdown in the ecclesial culture that supplied the seminary with a feeder system that started in congregations and ran through summer camps, colleges, and universities to the seminary. It is not just that organizations were more directly connected in the past than today, but that people—ministers and church leaders—were more intentional about guiding prospective talented candidates through the system.

One of the most exciting directions grantees initiated has been partnerships between seminaries with their supporting denominational bodies around issues of recruitment. The building of key partnerships may prove to have the most lasting impact on recruiting a new generation of people into

ministry. In many cases the seminary became the catalyst and convener of conversations and programming around the call and vocation to ministry. When church leaders and ministers come together, rarely do they disagree about the nature of the problem or the need to respond. The problem is they rarely come together to analyze the problem carefully or forge solutions to solve it. Several mainline denominational seminaries convened youth ministers, campus ministers, judicatory officials, seminary administrators and faculty, and local pastors and found it was the first time that church leaders from different areas of church ministry talked together about recruitment for ministry. Lack of connection was not the only barrier seminaries faced. Seminaries learned that one reason the people cannot stay engaged in conversation and work collaboratively across organizations is because of the high turnover in leadership positions, especially in middle judicatory church bodies but also in youth and campus ministry positions. As Seattle University project directors noted, be prepared to do more than half the work when you forge a partnership with denominations.

In other words, it is not uncommon for seminaries to find partners who are eager to talk about recruitment but who lack sufficient resources to do something about the problem. Progress was made when the seminary took the lead in planning and executing the work. For example, in the United Methodist Church, partners realized that the candidacy process is too complicated, especially for younger candidates. To a college student, the ten-year process, from candidacy through education to ordination, is too long. Seminaries and their partners deemed it necessary to find more hospitable ways of helping younger candidates negotiate the system and for the system to reconnect its various parts to make the process less cumbersome and mysterious for would-be ministers.

One of the most compelling ways Methodist seminaries found to work at the issue of recruitment was to partner with congregations and judicatories to create a "culture of the call" on the local level. Wesley Theological Seminary discovered one way seminaries and churches are disconnected in their conversations about vocation: seminaries are trying to recruit students into graduate theological studies, but people in congregations are trying to discern God's call in their lives. Wesley leaders shifted their focus to creating a culture of the call for all Christians with an emphasis on discerning ministry as one of many important calls in the Christian life.

Several Methodist schools developed biblical and theological materials on the call to ministry, highlighting the calls of both historical and contemporary persons. An important strategy used by United Methodist schools was to shift the conversation with denominational partners away from professional criteria for ministry or the problem of clergy shortage to theological interpretations of church ministry. The culture of the call was promoted through Ministry Sunday events (which are now required by several annual conferences) for which the seminaries provided preachers, brochures, curriculum materials, posters, and videos—any educational or worship materials that congregations would find useful. Some seminaries partnered with youth leaders around denominational rallies and events and created programming around the call to

ministry. For example, Wesley Seminary partnered with youth leaders in the denomination's Salt 'n Light Ministry that trains youth workers and summer camps counselors and were able to reach about 4,000 youth through various events.

Lancaster Theological Seminary was successful in bringing together seven United Church of Christ conferences in the course of two yearly events on recruitment. Denominational and seminary leaders explored issues of vocation, discernment, legal issues, lay ministry certification, alternative tracks to ministry education, and publicity about ministry. In addition the seminary hosted Discover weekends, revised promotional materials, designed a workbook for local congregations, and developed a new Web site. By increasing their admissions staff, Lancaster was able to build partnerships with chaplains, judicatory leaders, youth ministers, and pastors. Saint Meinrad's School of Theology tried a similar strategy by hosting a national symposium on the Millennial Generation for national, diocesan, and parish leaders. The seminary also designed a program for vocation directors focusing on using media and marketing more effectively to promote ministry.

A few seminaries found that the partnerships they tried to create with colleges were more difficult to navigate than expected. Two reasons seem most evident: some college faculty and campus ministers are hesitant and unwilling to encourage young people to consider ministry. Second, college students lack an understanding of what ministry is and what ministers do. Aquinas Institute's research study, conducted at the beginning of the grants program, revealed that Generation X and Millennial Generation students have little to no awareness that ministry constitutes a profession in the church for which people are paid. It seems that campus ministers encourage young adults who are interested in church service to consider volunteer programs after graduation but not congregational ministry.

Seminaries that attempted to work with colleges pursued several strategies: contacting college representatives about recruitment opportunities, making onsite visits to campuses, attending job fairs, and making classroom presentations about ministry. Only when seminary admissions counselors made their way into classrooms and were able to talk substantively about ministry and seminary education was the visit worthwhile to the seminary. Sending promotional materials to colleges garnered little interest from college students. Over the five-year grant period, recruiting on college campuses proved too expensive and time consuming for schools that tried to consider it as a strategy in the future. Northern Baptist Theological Seminary leaders reported that it takes them three to five years to establish partnerships with colleges that bear fruit.

Exploring ministry as a vocation. Inviting college students to engage in retreats or programs about ministry were more successful, though labor-intensive, strategies used by a few seminaries (e.g., Ministry in the Mountains sponsored by Aquinas Institute; Chicago Collegiate Seminary Program sponsored by Seabury-Western Theological Seminary; and Thinking of Priesthood retreats sponsored by Saint Meinrad's School of Theology). Exploratory programs about ministry were helpful in a variety of ways for students who at-

tended: students engaged a residential-learning experience where they could explore ministry, theology, and vocation with peers. One of the most important outcomes for participants in Saint Meinrad's program was overcoming a sense of isolation about their call to ministry because many think there is no one else like them who could be considering the priesthood. The retreats offered participants a chance to talk with other young men about vocation, priesthood, and ministry as well as broaden and deepen their understanding of vocation in the Christian life.

Each program enjoyed some success, but they all faced a common hurdle. Finding young people to participate in the program was quite difficult for each school. For example, Aquinas Institute was able to recruit seventy-nine students from twenty-five colleges over four years; about thirty-five students applied to Seabury-Western's program and thirty attended. Saint Meinrad's partnered with twenty-five dioceses to offer retreats, and nearly 500 young men participated over six years. The seminary and dioceses had difficulty finding college or young-adult males who, if they were attending college and are away from their home parish, were unknown to diocesan leaders.

Even though the seminaries met with low interest among college recruits, the results for those who did attend are worth noticing. Twenty-seven college students enrolled in Seabury-Western's program and thirteen are attending seminary or graduate school in theology. Of the seventy-nine students in Aquinas Institute's program, sixteen are working in ministry, mostly part time, and four are in volunteer service programs; another twelve are enrolled in graduate schools of theology, six are enrolled at Aquinas and four are considering attending the seminary. About half, then, have moved closer to considering ministry as a vocation, and about a quarter of the participants are in graduate school. Even though the program did not become a direct recruiting tool for the Institute, Aquinas found that the impact on both faculty and students made the experience worthwhile. Nearly three quarters of Aquinas faculty taught in the program, which heightened their knowledge and sensibilities about Millennial Generation students who will soon account for the student body all seminaries will be welcoming in the future.

Most seminaries cannot support labor-intensive programs for college-age students on their own, but for those that can partner with colleges to provide exploratory experiences, the efforts may be worthwhile. The challenge will be to find the students—seminary admissions counselors learned that the way to the students is through the college chaplain or a faculty member, both of whom influence young people's choices about service opportunities and careers.

A few seminaries worked with congregations to sponsor exploratory events for would-be candidates. For example, Bethel Seminary worked with three congregations to host Leadership Vision Seminars. The seminars were conducted by congregational and church leaders, with the assistance of the seminary, and focused on several age groups, including high school, college-age, young adults, and older church members. Implementing and hosting the two-day seminar proved labor-intensive because the seminar included personalized mentoring and coaching for each participant regarding an as-

sessment of personal character and leadership skills but with some important results. Of the nearly 1,800 participants, thirty have enrolled at Bethel Seminary and another twenty-five to fifty are considering entering the school. The seminary also discovered that the Strengths Finder and Character and Leadership Matrix were helpful tools for participants as well as members from the sponsoring congregations, who participated in the activities of discerning gifts for ministry and service. The one hurdle Bethel Seminary has encountered is tracking and follow-up contact with students. The commitment to be in contact with young people who have an interest in ministry is not impossible, but it is time-consuming and difficult work for the seminary. If the seminary can nurture college-age candidates and keep the topic of ministry before them, the seminary will eventually benefit.

Increasing enrollment and welcoming younger students. Seminaries that chose to work on recruitment report an increase in enrollment during the five-year grant period, though the reasons why are not necessarily directly related to grant activities. Many seminaries are finding that candidates who are applying to seminary are younger in age than in the past and some seminaries are finding they can be more selective from their pool of candidates. Certainly recruitment efforts, especially scholarships, have helped in a direct way, but raising the church's consciousness about vocation and ministry is also having some impact. For example, Aquinas Institute reports a 52 percent increase in lay MDiv students, with an increase in full-time students from 116 to 176 over the five-year grant; Eastern Mennonite Seminary has increased its FTE from sixty to ninety-six students; Eden Theological Seminary reports a twenty-year high in enrollment, with a majority of students, 70 percent, living on campus; Payne Theological Seminary has increased its study body from fifty-four students in 1999 (forty-two FTE) to one hundred students in 2002 (seventy FTE); and both St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and Wesley Theological Seminary report enrollments going up in all degree programs.

In addition, these same schools report an increase in the numbers of younger candidates. In 1997 Aquinas Institute had two students under the age of 30 enrolled in the MDiv program and today there are nine; Eastern Mennonite has the highest number of students under the age of 25 in last ten years; Eden Seminary reports that 50 percent of their students are under 35 years of age (about 30 percent are college graduates and 20 percent are a job out of college). Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary reports that in 1998, 23 percent of the entering class was under the age of 30, and today it is 50 percent; the average age of students is down from 40 to 33. Thirty-five percent of the students at Northern Baptist are under 30 years of age, St. Vladimir's reports the average age is down in the past five years, and Wesley Theological Seminary reports that one third of its entering class is under the age of 30.

Seminaries are eager to welcome younger students to campus. Besides the energy, critical questioning, and academic skills younger students bring, they also represent a generation that seek religious meaning of both personal experience and social realities. Many seminaries found that younger students infuse fresh ideas and bold questions into classroom discussions. Both Gen-

eration X and Millennial generation students want to make a difference in the world and have more opportunity to do so than perhaps any generation before.

Younger students are most likely residential students. They enliven campus and residential life and become involved in campus activities such as student government, chapel services, and student activities. More residential students place more demands on some seminaries, which most schools are pleased to provide but can stretch campus resources. While most young students are not yet married, in the case of St. Vladimir's younger candidates are often married with young families. The seminary is required to provide services that attend to the whole family: affordable housing, safety, playgrounds, health insurance, and health care.

While most seminaries find it easy to adjust to the culture of younger students, having younger students is not without its challenges. Young students bring enthusiasm but are not necessarily better educated, and not all are the kind of students interested in graduate seminars in a rarified topic. Many bring a strong piety and are committed to living out the Gospel, though it is not a traditional denominational piety. Many young people embrace more eclectic tastes in spiritual matters and openly embrace and experiment with a variety of religious disciplines and ideas. Northern Baptist found that seminary professors need to listen to what younger students are saying about ministry, formation, and today's church. If they are not listened to, they will most likely leave the seminary.

Younger students, according to Aquinas Institute, can often be "seekers" rather than "subscribers." Many seminaries found that they needed to help young recruits understand the demand of seminary studies while offering them a hospitable place to discern their Christian vocation. Of course, it has always been the case that some people come to seminary to figure out whether the ministry is their calling, but it appears that many more students come discerning rather than decided about ministry as their vocation. If that is the case, seminaries need to be prepared to help people sort through personal, spiritual, and vocational issues during their studies.

A key strategy to help schools achieve success in recruiting students and promoting ministry is adding staff in the admissions office. Some schools hired full-time recruiters for the first time. With more people-power, schools were able to expand the network and number of contacts with people in parishes, youth work, camps, colleges and universities, and seminary alumni. Full-time staff members were also able to increase the amount and the quality of seminary recruitment materials, including Web sites and information packets about ministry.

Issues of declining numbers of ministers face many denominations. The good news is that the trend can be reversed through a variety of strategies. It seems that no one way is best, but that multiple strategies yield the most results. For mainline denominational schools that have listened to the story of mainline decline for several years, the recruitment efforts of the Congregational Ministry Program grantees should be heartening. No doubt the decline

shifts to an incline, but the slope has not been too steep for those schools eager to become catalyst in the system to promote the call to ministry.

Enhancing education for ministry

Educating about the congregation. For several decades theological educators have worked to figure out the best models for educating ministers. In the 1970s and 1980s, educators asked questions about how to overcome the gulf between theory and practice, how best to integrate theology and ministry, and how to help ministry students understand how congregations work. In the recent past, theological educators have grown increasingly concerned about the social and cultural context in which ministry takes place, especially in relationship to the changing role of religion in society and the emerging multiplicity of cultures and diversity of ethnic communities in regions, cities, and congregations.

The calls for change in theological education have been numerous, but progress toward change has been slow and incremental, without much opportunity for experimenting with new models and pedagogies. When asked why theological education has such a difficult time changing the way it educates ministers, two problems are consistently mentioned: the academic guilds determine the research interests and classroom focus of the faculty far more than the contemporary needs of the church, and the practical fields, including field education and the various courses in practical and pastoral theology are perceived as second-best, second-rate, and less academic in comparison to what is often referred to as the "classical" disciplines. Unfortunately for seminaries, the academic continues to be pitted against the practical.

Old habits die hard on most faculties and while the Congregational Ministry Program has not buried that culture, several exciting experiments point to promising developments in ministry education. The experiments in contextual education, in particular, demonstrate that the context of ministry can be a central point *and* place of engagement for faculty, students, pastors and congregants. For instance, many seminary leaders argue that faculty members need to move closer to the realities of congregational ministry by being *in conversation with students* and pastors about the congregation or by *teaching students* in congregations, and to the extent that schools could make either happen, positive results abound. Schools moved closer to congregations in three ways: redesigning courses and curriculum, improving field education opportunities with faculty involvement, and faculty members in a few schools taught courses in congregations.

Drawing the context of congregational ministry into course work is the primary way faculty members have "contextualized" the curriculum. As Luther Seminary noted, they had never before sent students out to investigate the context of communities as a site for mission. Several schools have revised or offered new courses focusing on cultural and social issues in congregations. For example, faculty at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkley have revised a number of courses, such as Sociology of Religion, Vatican II and U.S. Catholics, Interfaith Aesthetics, Spiritual and Religious Quests, Introduction to Ecumenism, and Prophets: Ministry in a Global Context, with an eye to the local

cultural and ethnic realities of California and North America. The faculty also changed the one-semester integration seminar to a two-semester course titled, "Culture, Awareness, Immersion and Analysis," which includes a two-week immersion experience in Mexico. Luther Seminary changed their capstone MDiv course, Exercises in Biblical Theology, to Exercises in Biblical Theology for Leading in Mission. Boston University designed a practical theology seminar, Church and Theology in the Contemporary World, which engages students in interdisciplinary research on social and ecclesial situations in several world contexts. Regent College determined it was better to integrate its focus on marketplace ministry into two existing courses rather than developing new courses.

About one quarter of the schools undertook a revision of the MDiv degree with a particular contextual focus, or created new degree opportunities, and many were able to revise in light of ideas they tested during the project. For example, the Franciscan School of Theology, in response to the growing ethnic diversity on campus (five families of origin groups) combined two degrees to create a new degree: Masters in Ministry for a Multicultural Church. Seattle University now requires the course, "Ministry in Multicultural Context," in its MDiv curriculum. Christian Theological Seminary now requires one year of contextual education based on the success of the program it developed during the grant.

Some schools revamped field education opportunities by making them more focused and intentional learning experiences. Luther Seminary requires four semesters of contextual education and a one-year internship. Luther's project focused on redesigning the four semesters of contextual education into a corporate experience involving students, pastors, and faculty. Two to five students are assigned to a site, and the students from five sites are brought together with the five pastors and one or two faculty for monthly meetings. The curriculum focuses on the experience of ministry across the five congregations and helps students to both describe and evaluate the ministry of each community. Because the meetings go beyond the traditional student-supervisor conversation, students are able to see several models of ministry and to listen to pastors explain why they employ the models they do. Over the course of the five-year grant, eighty pastors and fifteen faculty members have participated with 120 congregations.

In addition to engaging students in conversation about ministry experiences, the Jesuit School offers students a chance to live at their contextual education site. Students formed an intentional lay community, Gelos House, located at a parish in the West Oakland Deanery, where they live in community based on Ignatian spirituality and practice. Interestingly, the lay community grew out efforts in the 1990s by students and the field education director through an integration colloquium in the field education program. In 1997, two years before the grant program began, the students and director met with the parish leaders in the West Oakland Deanery to begin conversation about how students could use their gifts for ministry in the area's underserved parishes. After site visits, interviews, and evaluations, the students became involved in youth ministry, a soup kitchen, social outreach ministries, liturgy, and prayer

groups in five parishes. The Gelos House was established as the student base for community life and ministry during their studies. In 1998, Jesuit School faculty members committed to an Enhanced Contextual Ministry Program in the Deanery to further establish relationships with the parishes. The Jesuit School's commitment included Jesuit faculty members opening a house in the Deanery, St. Mary's House, in order to live in the neighborhoods in which they were preparing students for ministry. Eventually, the Jesuit School assumed full pastoral responsibility for one of the parishes. Immersing students in the reality of congregational ministry, then, has far-reaching consequences for faculty if they follow the students into the neighborhoods!

Other schools offered field education opportunities that included stipends to students to serve in congregations that could not pay a stipend; creating longer internship opportunities, especially in dynamic churches; increasing the number of teaching parishes; and exposing students to ethnically diverse communities. Claremont School of Theology partnered with United Methodist conferences to develop a student pastor program, with stipend, for students to serve small and ethnic congregations that could not afford a full-time pastor. Perkins created longer internship opportunities, which can be fulfilled throughout the MDiv program or as a one-year full-time option after course work is completed.

Many theological educators have realized that adding more hours to field education is not necessarily the answer—it is the way students spend their time in field education that makes the greatest difference. In order to change field education into contextual education, schools are more selective about placements, training supervisors, and engaging in research. In a few schools, the most radical curricular change required sending faculty to congregations to teach. At Chicago Theological Seminary, forty-five students selected the contextual education program as their field education requirement and served in three urban congregations; eight faculty members participated in the program as well. Chicago Theological Seminary's faculty took the challenge to teach courses in the congregation with an emphasis on the congregation, for example, Reading the Psalms in Context; Worship as Local Theology; Theology of Atonement in Context; Bible and Economic Ethics; Personal and Social Transformation in Context. Faculty also participated in an integration seminar, "Practice of Christian Ministry," with all students in the contextual education program.

Something akin to the medical school model of education is emerging in a few places: faculty and pastors instructing student ministers where ministry happens. When it happens well, three outcomes emerge. First, faculty experience first-hand the realities that a minister faces day-in and day-out and they begin to see implications for their teaching. Faculty change both *what they teach* and *how they teach* by their immersion in the congregation. The most startling results are when faculty in Bible, history, ethics, and theology teach their subjects to ministry students in the congregation—the setting forces them to make the substantive content relevant to the life of faith and the practice of ministry. Furthermore, they are challenged to help students grapple with thinking theologically about what is happening in the congregation.

By enhancing field education or introducing contextual education, seminaries have strengthened their relationships to pastors and congregations. Both pastors and congregations become engaged in ministry education because they are invited to be intentional about their role in educating students and the context of their ministry is taken seriously by faculty members. Such intentionality on the part of theological educators makes pastors more connected to the seminary. For too long perhaps seminaries have assumed that pastors knew what to do in terms of supervising students in field education placements. Increasingly, schools are giving more attention to the training and supervision of supervisors—making it clearer what the seminary expects to happen through the pastor-student relationship and the student-congregation experience. For example, Phillips Theological Seminary established the Council of Teaching Congregations in order to link congregations and their pastors with one another. The Council offers ministers a chance to reflect on their vocation as educators of ministers.

When schools give more attention to this dynamic, they see results for both the pastor and the student. But add into the mix a faculty member and more can happen—the pastor becomes an honored dialogue partner, has the opportunity to learn from the scholar, and offers the scholar a realistic appraisal of ministry today; the faculty member is challenged to think critically (what most love to do), offer their insights and wisdom, and are invited to learn.

The primary winner in all of this, of course, is the student—though it is probably too early to tell how much of a difference efforts in contextual education will make when students graduate and become congregational leaders. But several indications point toward a model that can make a difference for students over the long-term. First, more time spent immersed in the realities of congregational life and ministerial responsibilities enhances vocational discernment—it makes students encounter the realities, challenges, and opportunities of ministry in a way classroom lectures or formation activities cannot do. Secondly, with both faculty and pastors as conversation partners, students are able to see the intellectual dimensions to the practice of ministry and why the study of theology *and* pastoral practice are so essential—it actually sends them back to the classroom eager for more study. Making the context of ministry a central focus of theological education allows integration to happen in a more natural way—the theological issues and religious interpretation of the situation arise when practitioners and scholars think together about the context.

One important activity that a few schools initiated is student research in congregations. Students were able to work with faculty in developing research projects around congregation life. Students could share their work with congregational leaders, and begin to see the impact that research can have for understanding how churches grow and thrive. Boston University, through its Center for Congregational Research and Development, engaged students in research on developing new congregations in the New England Annual Conference (UMC). Seven congregations were started; five remain viable today. The Center consulted with six other congregations and conducted research for the congregations through courses on evangelism and mission.

Finally, nothing can substitute for mentoring, guidance, and training by excellent pastors. Students require exposure to excellent practitioners—ministers who preach every week with substance and creativity, who care for the sick and dying with compassion, who teach the faith in compelling ways, who build ministries in response to pressing social needs, and who manage staffs, budgets, and buildings—all in the same week. Students need to encounter, over time, ministers who are reading, thinking, praying, and building up communities of faith. And it is even more obvious that seminary faculty do too.

What are the key factors that make contextual education experiments work when they do and fail when they don't? The key to success and the mark of failure consistently lie with faculty involvement. Faculty seem willing to talk about contextualizing theological education and designing new models for it, but actually *doing* it, with students in the field, is one of the biggest changes faculty have to embrace. At Jesuit School, faculty members had been calling for the need to contextualize the curriculum and to make more explicit the connections between theology, culture, and context, but the faculty was not certain how to implement the goal. When the grant opportunity came along in 1998, the school could test some strategies to actually do contextualized teaching and learning.

Contextual education requires a change in faculty culture, identity, and vocation. It challenges faculty to walk out the seminary doors and see the congregation as a classroom setting. It requires a different style of teaching where the text to be interpreted is the congregation, people's faith experience, and the demands of ministerial responsibility. It requires different contractual arrangements to be formed with the school. Contextual education requires faculty to be explicit about educational philosophies and pedagogies. It requires more time, and for some, may threaten time devoted to scholarly pursuits. Junior faculty members are particularly susceptible to the demands of the guild, and may feel unable to participate in "experimental" programs. Just about everything that contextual education requires flies in the face of faculty culture.

When it works, here's what happens. Faculty buy-in is high—not unanimous, but high. Most faculties agree that they have to engage student learning in the contexts of ministry and make it happen. Second, a few faculty members do it, and if they are the right faculty members, especially the right senior faculty, they become advocates and promoters of contextual education. Senior faculty can give junior faculty permission to try it. When a faculty member directs the program or a faculty committee is designated to give oversight, contextual education has greater academic standing. When selected faculty members are given time and resources to pursue scholarly research on issues facing congregations, the findings become part of seminary conversations as well as serve the interests of congregational leaders. When exciting things are happening for students in contextual education, they bring it back to the classroom, becoming catalysts for faculty to pay attention to the questions that arise from ministry. Curriculums and courses begin to change.

A second very important factor in successful field and contextual education programs is finding the right congregations to work with—pastors who have

the time to be with students, pastors who seek intellectual engagement with theologians, congregations that can form committees to guide and evaluate students' practice, congregations where exciting forms of ministry are shaping people's lives, and congregations that are connected to their communities and to community services. If the congregation is struggling or in survival mode or the minister is ineffective or burned-out, it is not a good context for students and should be avoided. Students will be able to help struggling congregations thrive if they have first experienced what a healthy congregation looks like.

In some cases, seminaries had to go far to find the right congregations, and some found partners close by. For example, Perkins School of Theology partnered with an African-American congregation in New Orleans that proved to be an excellent site for one-year internships. Luther Seminary partners with Shalom Hill in southwestern Minnesota as a residential site. Both Jesuit School and Chicago Theological Seminary were able to work with congregations in nearby neighborhoods.

Finally, field or contextual education works best when schools hire the right person to direct the program. It seems obvious, but if the wrong person was hired, the program stumbled. Most importantly, the program raises the profile of the field or contextual education director. Some schools utilized grant funds to hire a full-time director of field education, which allowed them to expand relationships and programs. Claremont School of Theology, for example, hired its first full-time director and found that it could enhance relationships with churches by giving more time, attention, and programming to field education. One important strategy that Claremont developed was training supervisors through seven on-campus meetings a year. The training sessions focus on teaching pastors how to mentor students, but also offer perspectives on leadership theory. The training sessions and a year-end celebration to honor their work sent a strong message that the seminary is a place that supports congregational ministers.

Time will tell whether the experiments in contextual education become a movement in theological education. Contextual education could replace or alter clinical pastoral education (CPE) as a paradigm for ministry education, with sociological approaches being substituted for psychology and therapeutic approaches. Contextual education shifts attention from the introspective and interpersonal skills to leadership skills in a local community. But replacing CPE would be a mistake; complementing it would be better. Emerging emphasis on contextual analysis should support CPE education because both are necessary for excellent ministry in the congregation.

More time and resources will be needed for schools to develop what they have started in contextual education programs. Schools need resources for faculty to develop pedagogies around teaching and learning in the context of ministry and resources to pursue research and intellectual work around contextual education. Schools also need to keep pursuing excellent field education opportunities. At present there is not nearly enough research, publication, and conversation going on among theological educators about how to do contextual education and why it matters for ministry.

Forming spiritual leaders. The development of spiritual formation programs is a second way in which schools sought to build capacity within the MDiv curriculum. Both Catholic and Protestant schools emphasized spiritual formation, with the Catholics adapting already existent formation programs for ordination candidates to their lay students, and Protestant seminaries developing programs for ordination candidates for the first time.

Why the emphasis on spiritual formation? Theological educators recognize that effective pastoral ministers are grounded in a relationship with God that is sustained over time, disciplined in practice, and bears fruit in personal and spiritual dispositions and habits. Seminaries are concerned with what they see happening to ministers once they leave seminary. A high rate of burnout, exhaustion, and turnover in ministry is one of the negative factors pushing seminaries to address issues of self-care and spiritual growth during seminary. Yet another is what seminaries see coming in the door: increasing numbers of students who are *not* ecclesially formed from birth and who are seeking religious identity and experience. Of these, many are converts to Christianity or to a particular denomination who, because of powerful personal experiences, are seeking more knowledge about and deeper experience of the faith. Whether these students have a call to ministry and have the capacity to lead a congregation is not always clear when they enroll in seminary, but what is clear is that the seminary seems to them to be a place where they can discover more than what their congregation, campus ministry, or parachurch organization had to offer. Theological education is serving an important catechetical role today for some students and spiritual formation programs fulfill a deep need and hunger for many students.

An overwhelmingly positive factor drawing seminaries to spiritual formation programs is the broad cultural interest in things spiritual and an ever-expanding ecumenical interest in adopting spiritual practices and traditions from distant Christian relatives, and even those outside the Christian household. Who, for example, would have guessed that twenty-first century Lutherans and Methodists would be walking in labyrinths, fasting from meals, or hosting centering prayer workshops? Spirituality is finding its way into Evangelical schools' curriculums and continuing education events as well.

While it is easy to be skeptical about spirituality in the culture today, especially its pop cultural forms in art and music, the quest of many Christians and their pastors for authentic religious experience is profound indeed. And that is one way to understand the thirst for the spiritual: the erosion of religious experience and identity by cultural powers that undermine the conditions for pursuing godly things (e.g., time, silence, beauty).

While Protestants struggle to overcome their inherent dislike for the term "spiritual," they have discovered wisdom in the practices of spiritual traditions that are neither cheap grace nor works righteousness. In fact, some of the most important work accomplished in the grant projects focusing on spiritual formation is the *theological* explanation and rationale schools developed for the spiritual formation program. In the case of several Protestant schools, administrators and faculty grappled with the language of spirituality, spiritual formation, and spiritual direction within the traditional categories of the Lutheran

and Reformed tradition. For example, Southern Lutheran Seminary faculty developed a position paper defining how spirituality can be understood in Lutheran theological terms. Likewise, faculty of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary faculty rejected a singular approach to spirituality, choosing to recognize diversity in the Reformed tradition as well as ecumenical resources beyond it. In both cases, where the project ended was not envisioned at the beginning *until* the community began defining what their terms meant theologically. In both cases the outcome is dramatic. Lutheran Southern is adding the requirement for a first-year spiritual formation course on vocation; Louisville is cosponsoring a new Masters Degree with Bellarmine University on ecumenical spirituality.

The spiritual formation programs are not marginal in the schools that emphasize it. The programs require new staff, faculty commitment, and student time. The most successful programs are able to balance and find a solution to these three elements; programs that have struggled have usually found one or more of these factors to be a major bump in the road. Student willingness seems to be high across the board, though participation does not always match desire. The number one culprit: time. Students insist that course workload, jobs, and family obligations keep them from participating in programs; if they had more time, they would be there. In most cases, schools added program opportunities or requirements without taking anything away; in the worst cases students resent what feels like piling-on.

Nonetheless, students increasingly participate in spiritual formation. For instance, about one-third of Lutheran Southern's students are involved in spiritual direction, up from zero when the program began five years ago. Similarly, fifty Louisville students are involved in spiritual direction groups, and nearly 60 percent of first level students participate in vocational discernment groups. In both cases the programs are voluntary. At Saint John's all students are required to participate in spiritual direction and report that it is the single most important part of the ministry formation program. At Claremont School of Theology a new five-day student orientation program is organized around themes of spiritual practice for theological education and focuses on theological reflection, self-care, and living and studying in a multicultural community. The program is voluntary yet nearly 100 percent of the entering students have participated, which has led the seminary to consider requiring a course on vocational discernment and spiritual practices in the curriculum.

Faculty participation is more difficult to determine: in some cases faculty are fully supportive, but don't participate—again, time being the main reason, though division of labor seems to be another. Faculty may decide that spiritual formation is the program director's job and not part of their responsibility. Some faculty may view spiritual formation as unnecessary, a passing fad, something that they did not need or receive in their seminary days. In the cases where the majority of faculty have approved of the program, had input *and* are involved in program activities such as mentoring, theological reflection groups, leading retreats, and participating in worship, all parties seem encouraged and satisfied. In the instances in which faculty defined theologi-

cally what spiritual formation meant in their tradition, the programs have a clear and solid foundation.

In the case of Catholic schools sponsored by religious orders the most exciting development has been the adoption of the order's traditional practices to the lay students' spiritual life. For instance, the Franciscan School of Theology invites students to develop a rule of life, based on the Franciscan practice of the community bound together by a rule. In this case, students design a rule that fits their life situation and spiritual gifts, and they are invited to a liturgy honoring their commitment. Over the past few years about seventy students, staff, and faculty have participated in the formation of a rule for life.

Finding the right person to direct a spiritual formation program is essential to its success. Several schools experienced turnover in the position, primarily because the "fit" between the person, job, and institutional culture was not present. What makes for a good fit? The fit between the person and the school's culture is essential. Obviously spiritual formation directors could have been very talented in spiritual formation work, but if they were new to seminary life, or worked around rather than with faculty, they often could not bring a nascent program to maturity.

Spiritual formation then is primarily about the ecclesial and communal culture that is part of the daily life of a school. A spiritual formation program cannot be launched by a single director; its success depends on that person's talent in continuity with the way the school functions. Operating against that culture will lead to isolation of the director and marginalization of the program. In those cases where the fit was right, seminaries have retained a full-time presence and put monies into programming beyond the grant support—they can't imagine being without the program or its leader.

What program directors seem to do best is to introduce the campus to spiritual practices and help students and faculty discern what styles and forms of prayer best suit their temperament, personality, and way of life. They offer retreat opportunities, introduce students to spiritual direction, work to enhance campus worship, encourage small group sharing in Bible study and theological reflection, encourage writing in a journal, and making an annual retreat. In other words, successful programs have not adopted the one-style-fits-all policy, but offer experimentation and exploration in a nonjudgmental and nonthreatening atmosphere.

The impact of programs on faculty and students is apparent. In some instances faculty are drawing connections between issues in spiritual formation and academic course work and are finding ways of teaching some of the topics in class (e.g., a course on the Psalms focuses on how Christians pray the Psalms). And in several cases, students recognize the spiritual formation director as their pastor and minister. Some students are clearly attracted to ministry of spiritual formation themselves and want to find ways of incorporating what they have learned in the program into their ministry. One of the most important elements for students across the denominational spectrum is participating in spiritual direction. Most schools help students find a director, but whether required or not, it is one aspect of spiritual formation that seems to have caught on and will probably continue for many as they enter full-time ministry.

As the programs have developed, schools have had to decide whether they are required or voluntary; about half fall into one or the other category. It appears that as programs mature and find connections with courses, aspects of the program become required. As mentioned above, some schools are exploring a first-year requirement for a course in vocational discernment. Catholic schools more than Protestants struggle with the issue of requiring spiritual formation for two reasons. First, they often have a required program for ordination candidates; if ordination candidates are required, shouldn't lay ministers? The second reason is the lack of church requirements for lay ministers—at this time there are no candidacy requirements for lay ministers prior to entering the seminary beyond academic requirements. Each school is struggling to figure out eligibility requirements as they go along: should students be screened before entering, or should screening and discernment take place once they have entered and be designated as a goal for the spiritual formation program? In the case of lay ministers, determining vocational identity, readiness for graduate studies, and readiness for ministry all fall to the seminary, not the church.

When programs are voluntary, they strike a note of hospitality and welcome. Forcing spiritual formation on individuals who are unwilling seems like poor ministry and is counterproductive. However, voluntary programs can face the problem of low attendance at events and miss some students altogether. They can resort to offering a smorgasbord of experiences to appeal to as many students as possible but spread staff and resources very thin. Accountability becomes the biggest issue in voluntary programs: if this really matters to the school, how can it be enforced?

Seminaries have also learned that it is important to be in conversation with denominational officials about formation, especially Protestant schools that are taking on formation programs for the first time. Oftentimes enlisting the help of denominational officials lends credibility and support to the effort. For example, Seattle University offers stipends to denominational formation coordinators who serve as leaders of quarterly gatherings of students from their denomination. The strategy is particularly important at Seattle University where twelve denominations are represented and where ecumenical formation has a priority. But even in the midst of ecumenical formation, Seattle places a high premium on denominational identity and sought assistance from regional and congregational leaders to insure it happens.

The degree to which spiritual formation programs are effective in terms of enhancing ministerial identity and impacting the practice of ministry is yet to be determined. Younger students are proving to be more challenging on spiritual formation issues than older students. For example, Franciscan School of Theology has found that younger students often have had little Christian formation at home and lack understanding about the theology and changes stemming from the Second Vatican Council; they can be more individualistic and consumerist when it comes to spirituality.

Programs that have gone through their initial growing pains and established a regular set of program offerings have found what best meets student needs. But schools will need to find ways of tracking students beyond gradu-

ation to discover what actually sustains people in ministry. What, of all the many program offerings, seems to make a difference for ministry?

The enthusiasm schools show for all things spiritual needs to be checked, however. Many of the practices that Christians and ministers are exploring have their genesis in Catholic religious orders and that context played a very important role in how the practices were understood and carried out. Much can be learned from the history of religious orders about what sustains people and their practices over time. First and foremost is community, but not just any community; it is a community bound by a commitment, often embodied in a rule. Rarely can an individual hold to the disciplines of daily prayer, fasting, worship, and silence; it is not impossible, but most of us, including most pastors, are not cut from the saint's cloth. Most people need the discipline and rules of community life to impress on them the habits of *daily doing* that keep shaping them over time. Dabbling in one spiritual practice this month, another next month, and something else next year is not the stuff of the spiritual tradition.

Students may very well experience a community of practice in seminary, but they won't find it in ministry. In fact, they will be looked upon to be building a community of such practice and wisdom. Yet what kinds of community of spiritual discipline and accountability do ministers have that can help them sustain their spiritual life over time? Finding a spiritual director or retreat house nearby, while essential to sustaining one's focus, is not the same as living and abiding in a promise-keeping community bound together in a common life.

Lay leaders seeking theological education. The advent and development of lay persons serving the local church as ministers is a very recent phenomenon in both the Catholic and Protestant communities. Lay people serving as leaders in congregations, of course, has a long tradition and continues in many respects today as people serve on governing boards, in catechetical roles, in social service outreach programs, and liturgical roles. In the past, in nearly all instances, lay persons who felt the call to ministry sought to fulfill their call to service through ordained ministry. For example, as Protestant women sought full-time service in ministry in the twentieth century they pushed to change access to ordained ministry and, in most instances, denominations allowed the ordained ministry to expand to include these once excluded candidates.

But recent developments in ministry appear to be different: people are emerging in churches that seek to serve as ministers but who are not interested in doing so through the traditional role of ordained minister. In the Catholic community, for instance, many lay people seek positions as ministers and choose to do so as lay people. In other words, if ordination requirements changed to allow women or married men to be ordained ministers, many people serving in ministry would remain unordained. Some, of course, would prefer their status be changed, but regardless of ordination status, a different kind of minister and a different form of ministry is emerging outside of ordination. A similar phenomenon can be seen in some parts of the Protestant community where lay people are seeking formal theological education and positions in ministry as lay, not ordained, leaders.

The Congregational Ministry Program came along as many Catholic schools faced the stark reality that the number of ordained candidates was drastically decreasing and an increasing number of lay people were seeking education for full-time ministry. Many Catholic schools, particularly those run by religious orders, had opened their doors to lay students in the 1970s, offering Masters programs in ministry, primarily in the area of religious education. By the 1990s, lay people were seeking the Masters of Divinity degree, traditionally designed for ordination candidates. Increasingly, lay ministers were finding themselves in the position of leading parishes as pastoral associates or parish life coordinators. Catholic parishes have had to adjust to being served by one ordained minister, who may or may not be in residence in the parish. If the director of religious education was the primary position of the lay minister in the 1970s, by the 1990s the faith formation director, liturgist, and parish administrator are the jobs most likely to be filled by lay ministers. The shift taking place in theological education since the 1970s has been not only the growing numbers of lay students seeking education, but the growing reality that lay ministry is a distinct vocation requiring theological explanation, requirements for education, and ecclesial acceptance and accountability.

All nine Catholic schools chose to develop programs for lay students that focus on recruitment, revising curriculums, developing spiritual formation opportunities, and placing lay ministers in jobs. Recruitment, at the outset, seemed to not be a major challenge, as the numbers of lay people serving in ministry has been on the rise for the past two decades. Yet recruitment was more of a challenge than anticipated: lay people find it difficult to relocate and face financial challenges to enroll full time, especially if they have families. In the wake of the sexual abuse scandals across the country and the growing financial crisis at the diocesan and parish level, seminaries and other types of ministry formation programs have recently experienced a decrease in the number of students preparing for ministry. In the past year the numbers of Catholic lay ministers enrolled in ministry education dropped by 10,000. It is important to note that the two West Coast Catholic schools placed less emphasis on lay ministry and more emphasis on multicultural ministry, not because lay ministers are not a reality in their area, but because the demands of ministering in multicultural community requires much greater attention at the present time. For example, Franciscan School of Theology dropped "lay" from the title of its spiritual formation program to emphasize that spiritual formation is for all students.

Several schools, especially those on the West Coast and in major cities, face the challenge of recruiting leaders from ethnic communities. The challenge proved greater than school officials expected. Most assumed finances were the major barrier and allotted grant funds for scholarships for minority candidates. The reality proved more complicated: in some cases candidates had good paying jobs and the prospects of full-time study at the expense of giving up full-time pay was not feasible; for some, the prospects of full-time church ministry was not appealing if they already had full-time employment; and for some, graduate studies was not possible. In several cases, schools could not

find candidates that would match their educational products; lay ethnic candidates exist for ministry, but many need theological education in ways most seminaries do not deliver it, (e.g., certificate programs, short courses, bilingual courses, and undergraduate courses).

By and large most lay students find employment, though the situation appears to be different in various regions of the country depending on the support, acceptance and presence of lay ministry in a diocese and region. By and large, lay students are employed in a wide variety of positions in the church, but the parish is not always their first choice. Lay ministers are employed as high school religion teachers, hospital chaplains, diocesan officers, campus ministers in high schools and colleges, and retreat directors. The parish is perceived to have strong clerical and episcopal control, low job security, and less authority; other ecclesial contexts give lay ministers more autonomy and independence.

Schools learned that the reality of the lay minister is not always welcome in some parts of the Catholic community. Some church leaders and parishioners would prefer priests as their ministers and see the emergence of lay ministry as a necessary response to the crisis of dwindling numbers of priests. But other church leaders and theologians see lay ministry as an exciting development and one that has emerged not from crisis but from vocation. Important theological work continues as scholars and church leaders define the meaning and reality of lay ministry, which in turn has forced a rethinking of ordained ministry. St. John's grant supported the Collegeville Ministry Seminar, which hosted a number of leading theologians to advance thinking about lay and ordained ministry. Their work was published in the book, *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Ordained and Lay Ministry,* in 2003.

Interestingly a similar phenomenon of lay ministry is emerging in some Protestant communities, and more and more schools are recognizing the need to prepare lay leaders to serve congregations (e.g., Total Common Ministry in the Episcopal Church and commissioned lay pastors in the Presbyterian Church (USA)). The catalyst for lay ministry programs comes primarily from the fact that a large number of small congregations cannot afford a full-time pastor. Denominations are making allowances for a locally-recognized and mandated lay person to serve as a preacher or pastor. For example, the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary offers eight courses online for its lay pastor program, all of which are required by the Presbyterian Church (USA). The seminary is also developing advanced elective courses. Four University of Dubuque faculty members have taught in the program; adjuncts have been recruited from around the country. The Presbyterian Church (USA) estimates that about 400 lay pastors serve congregations in the United States and Puerto Rico.

The response to the lay pastor program at Dubuque has been outstanding: 522 students have taken at least one course in the past five years; eighty-seven presbyteries have at least one student enrolled. Most students are retired or near retirement and are seeking ways to serve their local congregation; very few would ever be candidates for ordained ministry.

Phillips Theological Seminary is also working with judicatories to offer training to licensed lay ministers. The numbers of lay ministers are increasing but the reality is that no church body—the seminary, the judicatories, or the congregations—has the money to support their education. With grant support, Phillips was able to test, via distance education, one course, "Preaching the Lectionary," through video-conferencing technology to lay ministers located in Missouri. The course had good attendance and was well-received, but the seminary cannot on its own build the structures to educate lay pastors located at great distances from the seminary. Their experience raises an important question for all to consider: Who is responsible for the education of the local lay leader?

New delivery systems in theological education

Perhaps no other aspect of the Congregational Ministry Program developed as quickly and met with such broad and unexpected success as the strategy to deliver theological education via technology. Clearly the bias of theological educators is for full-time residential students: teaching and learning, spiritual formation, and community life are all at an optimum if the school is a community that joins together face-to-face and where students live together for the duration of their course work. But the distance education strategies have proven that teaching and learning, spiritual formation, and community can all be gained through another medium, not so much at the expense of residential education, but as a complement to it.

The bias against distance education runs deep, but the evidence mounted by a few schools in the Congregational Ministry Program answers nearly every critique. Two important issues stand out in regard to education via technology: what constitutes teaching and learning through the new mediums and creating greater access to theological education.

Important developments were taking place in the evolution of technology just as schools went to work on designing and delivering distance programs in the late 1990s. In several instances, schools thought they would be delivering courses via video-conferencing technology: live pictures and voices of teachers and students reaching each other across space and time—something akin to interactive television. But within about a year's time, the VCT technology was deemed too expensive and too cumbersome in comparison to the Web-based Internet options that were emerging. Interestingly, the Web-based formats have proven to be *better* educational delivery systems. In other words, advocates claim that more effective teaching and learning happens through online courses. Furthermore, schools have found they can reach more students in more places with better educational outcomes using the Internet.

When you ask the enthusiasts to talk about distance learning via technology, they almost never talk about the technology. The big surprise is how effective online teaching and learning can be for both faculty and students. What was thought to be a second-rate option, has in fact, for some, become a primary means of education for residential and distance students. What faculty members have learned about the merits of online teaching and learning is translated into their classroom teaching. Some schools find that when students

discover the merits of online learning, they request (or demand) that campus courses offer some online features.

What is the magic of online education? Two important features have emerged: faculty members are more intentional about how they teach and students are more active agents in the learning process. Besides contextual education programs, distance learning is the other area where faculty were challenged to change how they teach. Developing online courses is not as simple as modifying a residential-based course; it requires essentially that the professor develop a new course. In particular teachers have to develop ways in which students will engage the content of the material in discussion. Faculty, then, had to learn the computer skills to execute the course, and to develop a course that fit computer technology. Faculty resistance? Nearly universal. Faculty conversions? Most if not all faculty involved in distance education embraced the new format. In some cases, it is not a medium in which all faculty teaching will excel, and that seems fine for most schools.

One important element that made faculty members open to considering teaching online courses and changing their teaching practice was the kind of support they received, both in terms of personnel and technology. Providing faculty with the best equipment is not enough, though it helps. Making available first-rate technology with first-rate instruction in how to use it promotes the best outcome. If faculties are forced to use outdated equipment, much of the focus is on getting the technology to work, and they lose focus on the subject matter being taught.

But the most important element for faculty conversion and finally support of online programs is the reaction of students. Faculty report that student learning is enhanced—things that do not happen in a classroom happen online, in particular the way students express their ideas and interact with one another around important issues. Teaching moves beyond delivering content in the classroom, to creating an environment where student learning is focused, challenged, and enhanced, especially through student-to-student dialogue.

What happens for students? Some people have a chance at being a theological student who otherwise would not. For many of these students, access to theological education is impossible—they cannot relocate to a seminary or give up employment for three years to complete a degree. Online learning delivers education to these highly motivated students. It appears that students are willing to be trained to take online courses, to invest in the computer technology and Web-based services that support the course, and to spend the time reading and writing for class. The University of Dubuque requires online students to take a six-week technology course prior to beginning studies. There is nothing cheap or easy about online learning for students. And the accountability factor is pretty high: it is obvious if you are not participating in class.

Developing spiritual formation opportunities for students has not proven as difficult as once thought. Schools have worked to help students find mentors or spiritual directors to guide in vocational discernment; most students have a home church where they worship and practice ministry. Working with supervisors for field education is a bit more of a challenge, but not impos-

sible. Most project directors have found that students take the initiative to build a learning community at their work and ministry placements. Most students discover a learning community of peers with their online colleagues, people with whom they can share ideas and in which they can turn for support, prayer, and counsel. Many faculty and program directors are surprised and delighted to discover the depth of conversation and care that takes place between students online.

Were seminaries able to recruit new students through distance programs? There is a slight indication that access to theological education via distance programs recruits new students, but the programs do not create new student populations from around the country or globe. In the case of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond most students are from the region (70 percent within commuting distance). The seminary has a total of 336 students and sixteen instructors in distance education courses, with ten of its fifteen full-time faculty teaching in the program. By 2002, Baptist Richmond had developed thirteen courses; all required MDiv courses are now available to students online.

Distance courses seem to be a way for some students to enroll in a course without applying for a degree, and so may increase nondegree enrollment. Some nondegree online students eventually find their way to being seminary students. Some seminaries, such as the University of Dubuque, are serving special populations. Dubuque had hoped to reach Alaskan and Native American students, who are at a far distance from the seminary, but the seminary had difficulty recruiting for the courses and students did not have proper equipment. Dubuque had more success with educating lay pastors through distance courses.

Beyond seminary: Placing and sustaining ministers in the field

Education beyond the seminary degree is an important strategy that builds capacity. It is one of the most varied strategies in the program because there are a wide variety of educational experiences offered, ranging from lectures or one-day workshops to three-year peer group gatherings. Another factor that influences continuing education programs are the variations in denominational culture around issues of ongoing formation and education in ministry. Where a culture of lifelong learning exists in a denomination and where expectations and rewards are high for engaging in such learning, seminaries are able to develop a full menu of educational offerings, often tailored to specific populations. But where a culture of ongoing education is not present within congregations or denominational bodies—as evidenced by a lack of expectation, requirements, and financial assistance—seminaries struggle to maintain programming at a significant level and come up short on effecting change within the system.

The difference is largely denominational. Mainline Protestants can boast of a developed tradition of continuing education as a systemwide culture for ordained ministers. Evangelical Protestants can boast a congregation-based form of education with a highly motivated pool of ministers who are looking

to develop skills for successful ministry. Catholic ministers have little to boast about in terms of encouragement, finances, or expectations.

Among mainline Protestants, the United Methodists have the most obvious chance for cultivating a pool of likely participants for continuing education, since they do not ordain graduates immediately after completion of the MDiv degree. Methodist candidates undergo a three-year probationary period for further education and discernment prior to ordination. The three-year period provides a window of opportunity for both the seminary and annual conference to work together. Wesley Theological Seminary developed a package of educational programming for probationers (online) that focused on issues related to transition into full-time ministry, theology of ordained ministry, and teaching and preaching in the congregation. The probationer's program proved far more demanding as a tool for continuing education, because it is course-based rather than event-based. The program is more labor intensive for faculty and pastors but far more rewarding for both. Saint Paul School of Theology conducted research on probationers' experience and published a report in 2003, "The Journey from Readiness to Effectiveness: A Survey of the Probationary Process in the UMC." The report's author, Lovett Weems, concludes that mentoring is a key factor in assisting probationers through the process toward ordained ministry; supervision by district superintendents is the least effective.

Similar to the probationary program are continuing education programs in which seminaries focus on their own graduates as they make the transition from seminary to ministry, especially in the first three years. For example, Bethel Seminary combines mentoring for solo pastors in which pastors receive sustained coaching for eighteen months after graduation. Mentoring includes one-on-one weekly telephone conversations, and participation in peer learning workshops focused on congregational leadership in the areas of planning, change, finances, and outreach. Bethel leaders realized how under-represented solo pastors are in continuing education events, even though they constitute a very large number of people in ministry. Their time and resources are limited, but one significant barrier to attracting solo pastors to events is that they are not accustomed to asking for continuing education support from their congregations.

A similar strategy that proves successful is providing opportunities for alumni to participate in seminary continuing education opportunities. Grant support allowed seminaries to offer alumni an opportunity to attend workshops by subsidizing fees and travel. Some schools developed online resources, especially discussion boards and chat rooms for pastors to stay connected beyond graduation.

One of the most important forms of continuing education that has emerged is the peer group or sustained learning community that engages a group of pastors and theologians in learning together over time. For example, Lancaster Theological Seminary's Leadership Renewal Program formed eleven groups of approximately one hundred pastors that met regularly over three years with faculty. The goal of the program is to assist pastors in facing the challenges of ministry in a diverse and changing context. Pastors found both

intellectual and spiritual renewal through ongoing conversation and support from their peers. And faculty discovered that through participating and teaching in the peer group they came to a better understanding of how postmodern realities impinge upon the daily work of pastors. Lancaster has become a regional resource center for congregations, reaching pastors far beyond their graduates, especially clergy in their region that do not know about the seminary.

Likewise, the Institute for Reformed Theology at Union Theological Seminary brings together pastors, faculty, students and denominational leaders in colloquies that meet from four to seven times over twelve to eighteen months. Students are able to participate and receive credit, and fifteen faculty members have participated over the past five years. Faculty members are able to engage the Reformed theological tradition with pastors and students, which have heightened the seminary's identity and profile in churches. Over the past several years, the Institute has sponsored colloquies focusing on worship, ecclesiology, race, and economics—all with a view to exploring a Reformed theological understanding of pressing issues faced by ministers and their congregations. The program has been so successful, the model is being replicated in other areas of the country. Schools experimenting with peer learning models are finding that a sustained learning environment allows relationships to develop, vulnerabilities to emerge, disagreements to be expressed and met honestly, and interpretations to become richer and deeper.

Catholic seminaries are developing continuing education programs to reach lay ministers. A few schools devoted financial and full-time personnel resources to develop and promote a continuing education program but with mixed results. A survey of lay ministers in Minnesota revealed to St. John's that lay ministers generally are interested in ongoing learning, as are ordained members, but most do not have the time or the money to support involvement in such educational opportunities. Because of the size and scope of the parish programs directed by lay ministers, it is a fact that they are overworked and do not have much time. But it is also true that there is little expectation for professional development because there is little recognition that they are professionals. A culture for learning will develop as the recognition and requirements for lay ministers become more widely accepted. Catholic seminaries will have a difficult time creating this culture on their own; they certainly cannot support it financially or subsidize it for long.

The current culture of continuing education has had an impact on each Catholic school that offered workshops and peer learning opportunities. For instance, St. John's sponsored ninety events with about 1,500 participants but cancelled 40 percent of the programs. Washington Theological Union found it particularly difficult to recruit pastors to attend one-day events with all costs covered because they could not leave their work. Saint Meinrad's Church Leadership Center was designed to serve ongoing educational needs of ministers, with the hope that parish teams would utilize the Center's programs as well as come for retreats, but only three parish staffs could afford the time to come to the Center.

Catholic schools are finding a way to serve ethnic ministers in continuing education programs. The Jesuit School offers a two-week Hispanic Institute that focuses on theology and ministry. Students are able to take eight courses over three summers for a certificate in ministry. The Franciscan School of Theology, likewise, collaborates with Latino, Vietnamese, Filipino, and African-American communities to host a summer institute certificate program. With sustained attention to the needs of all ministers, Catholic schools have gone a long way in creating a culture of professional learning and development, and without their efforts, many lay ministers would have little opportunity for continuing education.

Part Two: Making strategic advances to strengthen capacity

Strengthening essential capacities

What capacities for training high quality congregational ministers are essential for theological education today? Many answers are the same as those answers from ten or fifty or a hundred years ago: excellent leadership, first-rate faculty, quality students, strong finances, and a stable infrastructure. But additional capacities have emerged that are particular to the ecclesial and social situation of many seminaries today—capacities that involve working creatively and flexibly to build partnerships within ecclesial systems that are diminishing; capacities to create a momentum and interest in ministry within the churches; capacities to create multiple forms and avenues to theological education beyond graduate degrees; and capacities to respond to an environment of religious and moral pluralism that continues to impact religious identity and community.

Great Leaders. Seminaries need presidents and deans who can lead with ecclesial and intellectual vision—leaders who know the realities of their church bodies and can be a leader within the church beyond the seminary and who know the realities of graduate professional education and can operate creatively and efficiently in the context of multiple demands on the educational system. In speaking with presidents and deans to prepare this report, I asked interviewees what they saw as the three most pressing concerns facing theological education in the next five to ten years. Every person answered that finances are a major challenge facing theological education, regardless of the size of the school, endowment, or denominational relationships. Many are worried that the MDiv degree is not affordable and that many students will choose other options than the seminary for ministry education. Of course, many presidents and deans are concerned about cultivating the younger generation, enough of whom will stay in ministry for a lifetime and who will be attracted to serving in the congregation.

But finances and students were not always the first answer to my question. For many presidents or deans who view their role primarily as church leaders and public intellectuals the problems are much broader in scope. I heard concerns about the changing demography of America and how to prepare ministers for a world that is coming to be. Alongside the growing pluralism of American Christianity, many presidents and deans noted the in-

ternational situation and the way global pluralism changes the way religious peoples live together for better or worse. How will we prepare ministers who are firmly grounded in their Christian identity but able to navigate in plural religious, social, and ethnic environments where other perspectives and ways of life need to be honored? Many worry about religious communities becoming closed, balkanized, and living in opposition, at times violently, with their neighbors. How can congregational ministers lead both their congregants as well as be a public voice for the social good?

Beyond presidents and deans, theological education needs good leaders in key organizational positions that serve students' direct needs and that work directly with partner organizations: directors of spiritual formation, field or contextual education, church relations, distance learning programs, and institutional advancement. Not only do schools need strong leaders in each of these key positions, but they need the right people in the right roles. Regardless of position, if a person was hired through the grant and did not fit the institutional culture or possess the necessary skills to navigate the administration and faculty culture, the strategy came to a standstill, and in some cases set the seminary back.

The question that needs serious attention is, how do we recruit the best and the brightest administrators and staffs into theological education? What are the feeder systems that develop the necessary qualities to be a good dean or director of church relations, field education, or spiritual formation? What can be done to make sure administrators and their staffs have the necessary support, continuing education, spiritual formation, and vocational discernment to do their jobs well?

Most seminaries cannot afford to have multiple staff positions in each office: in many cases one or two people work in each area (or in some cases one person covers two or more jobs), making the need for highly skilled administrators and staff paramount to the success of the work. Theological education needs administrators who can understand the complexities of theological education as well as denominational realities and at the same time be creative agents working at a variety of fronts to effect change in educational and ecclesial systems. When staff officers do not have the collegial support to do so, they become isolated. Oftentimes, the solution offered is to make sure those positions are filled by faculty, so the person has the status and governance role accorded to the faculty. But are there ways to expand governance to include people in key leadership positions beyond the faculty, for example, directors of field or contextual education, spiritual formation, or church relations?

Faculty involvement. In the majority of schools, some if not most faculty members were engaged in some aspect of the Congregational Ministry Program: teaching new or redesigned courses, working with field education projects, teaching in continuing education programs. If project leaders found that they had a difficult time engaging faculty members in the grants project, it was primarily because of two main reasons: time and expertise.

It is important to note how much faculty roles have expanded in the past twenty years. Not only is the knowledge base in every theological discipline growing, but areas of scholarship are more specialized. It is not fair to com-

pare what faculties have to know and communicate today with the intellectual work of theological faculty in the 1950s or 60s. A constant faculty concern is how to manage the information flow, how to keep up in one's discipline, how to at least sound like you know what is happening in other theological disciplines let alone disciplines outside theology. If schools were working on contextual education or spiritual formation projects, faculty were often working outside their areas of expertise, which can cause some discomfort.

Furthermore, the role of scholar, teacher, advisor, mentor, and governing agent all add more and more work—more is added but little is taken away. So, when energetic staff persons are hired to run a new program and they cannot garner faculty enthusiasm or participation, they are running up against certain realities shaping the complex (and multiple) role of seminary professors. In most cases, faculty members go out of their way to assist students and serve the school. Recently at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, for example, some full-time faculty contributed their salary raise to student scholarships. Such faculty commitment does not go unnoticed by students: some of the students with the highest awards volunteered to contribute back a total of $5,000 to incoming students.

A highly successful strategy employed by several schools involved building a body of knowledge through research on issues important to the church, to congregations, and to the seminary. One grantee noted that all schools should be required to do research at the outset of a grant. In those cases where grantees did conduct research at the beginning, the findings proved particularly helpful in gaining perspective on an issue *before* providing a programmatic solution. Saint Paul's study of probationary candidates clarifies what candidates found most useful during the probationary period, what inhibits their growth and development, and what points of the system are weakest in aiding candidates through the process. Most importantly, the research provided a platform for partnerships with annual conferences and the Boards of Ordained Ministry. The seminary supplied church officials with immediate and relevant knowledge about the situation of probationary candidates, which could be used to adjust and improve the process in each conference. In this instance the seminary serves as an intellectual center for the church engaged in meaningful applied research.

Strategic vision. Strategic vision is an important capacity for schools, especially when it is based on a realistic appraisal of the state of church ministry and the intellectual challenges facing Christian communities today. Strategies require a grasp of the seminary as a player in larger ecclesial, educational, and social systems but also require a realistic sense of how to work to effect realistic change. Strategic visions have to be translated into discrete projects, and the most effective projects are those that work steadily at incremental change over time. Some seminaries can multitask, affecting change at many points in the system at one time, but most cannot do so at a high level of engagement, energy, and progress, especially when the church is in a state of dissipation.

Seminaries need to choose strategic advances that fit their capacities and be realistic about the time it will take to make change happen—it is going to be slow. Most seminaries don't have a lot of room for failure, so they need to

proceed with care. The most effective change starts out small, realizes some success, makes adjustments through failure, gains momentum, adds further dimensions, and eventually becomes a movement. But rarely can all that happen in five years—in most cases institutional leaders are looking ten to fifteen years down the road to affect the kind of change they desire.

Why is change so slow, especially when it is so obvious what needs to happen? One obvious reason is that many seminaries, especially mainline Protestants, have moved so far away from their denominational sponsors that it requires time to just get to know each other, build up sufficient trust and dispel suspicions, and create a shared vision about what can be done together. Bridging the gulf between seminary and middle judicatories has proven one of the most challenging tasks in strengthening capacity. Most seminary leaders complain about how weak these systems have become, how unsure people are of their roles within the system, the dire financial situation, and the constant turnover of personnel—very little that points to a stable environment where seminaries can be working.

Good strategies include evaluation and dissemination, both of which are essential to building capacity. All schools were encouraged to engage in some form of internal evaluation, and most took up the challenge. Seminaries tend to think of evaluation in terms of answering to external demands, such as accreditation or foundation requirements, but the Congregational Ministry Program grantees were encouraged to think of evaluation as a way to build a culture of evidence and learning for themselves, their partners, and other theological schools. Most schools did conduct good internal evaluation of their programs and by the end of the grant had a realistic sense of the impact programming had on participants. Some schools invited outside evaluators to give additional critique to their work.

Grantees are eager to disseminate information about their programs and about insights into what they are learning. Nearly all schools used seminary publications to do so: newsletters, magazines, Web sites, and promotional materials. Some promoted their programs through denominational publications. In terms of research publications, about a dozen books were published by faculty members, and several more books are forthcoming.

The bottom line. The most disturbing reality is the financial position many seminaries face, as mentioned above. While some have large endowments, most have seen revenue streams dwindle to a trickle. Again, most mainline Protestant seminaries have seen a significant decrease in denominational support in a very short period of time, something that tuition dollars will not make up. Catholic seminaries that have a majority of lay students scramble to find scholarship money from private donors; rarely is there diocesan financial support for these ministers.

Seminaries are increasingly dependent on four sources of revenue: private donors, tuition, endowments, and grants. Most seminaries are working very hard, primarily by adding staff in development offices, to get donors to support the annual fund, scholarships, or endowed chairs. During the recent economic downturn, many seminaries did not reach the goals they dreamed of in 1998 but were able to keep apace and connect more and more individu-

als to the seminary's work. Even in difficult economic times over the past five years, seminaries with people working full-time on fundraising experienced gains in annual fund drives, though few could raise the funds to support the entire grant budget beyond the end of the grant period.

Student tuition dollars do help the bottom line, but the cost of educating seminary students is quite high for most schools because tuition is heavily subsidized. In university-based seminaries, the seminary student ends up costing a great deal more to educate than the other professional schools precisely because tuition is kept low. Obviously, more students create more tuition dollars, but it also demands more support in terms of scholarship money and other forms of tuition assistance. Very few seminaries can survive into the future on tuition dollars alone.

Endowments help seminaries immensely, though growing the endowment is a constant challenge. Again, the economy after 2000 saw more losses than gains. Many seminaries run the normal cycle of capital campaigns and it appears that those who are undertaking major campaigns are meeting with success. A quite successful strategy several schools employed is raising money to support a faculty position through an endowed chair. Several schools were able to secure the funds to keep a new faculty position hired through the grant in the relatively short period of five years.

Good grants. Obviously grant money is a much sought after source of revenue for schools, and the Congregational Ministry Program provided the largest sum of money offered to seminaries through one grant program from a foundation (up to $1.5 million). Seminaries can learn important lessons from this program about large grant projects and budgets. *Lesson One: Big is not necessarily better.* Obviously, one size does not fit all because seminaries vary so much in terms of size, and not all seminaries can absorb a large grant in the same way. Some struggled to spend the money in five years in ways that were both prudent and helpful. Some schools advanced a super-sized strategy based on their analysis of an entirely broken ecclesial system that needed fixing, but these schools could only make advances on a few fronts, both because of the limitations of their capacities, but also due to the weakness of the systems in which they attempted to work.

One factor about large grants is that they can prove to be difficult to manage for seminary leaders because they require extensive administrative attention, more than most people realize at the outset. The reason is that large grants are usually comprised of several discrete projects, each of which could be a grant project on its own. One wise president remarked that they passed up an opportunity for another large grant because they needed to raise their own capacity to relate to donors and not become dependent on grant funds for normal operations.

What large grants do best is make room for experiments—they allow schools to try something new, take a risk, fail here and there, and find out what works. In most cases the Congregational Ministry Program projects were experiments on both a large and small scale and they allowed schools to do things they never could have on their own. Many schools were already defining strategies, identifying issues and needs, and looking to pursue some

fronts: the grant allowed schools to accelerate the timeline and make those realities happen more quickly. Large grants allow for extra support to do some work more quickly, but if the project proceeds too fast it is neither manageable nor sustainable.

Lesson Two: Keep planning (and evaluating) so that when opportunities arise, ideas and projects can be pursued, even if it is not clear at the time how the work will be funded. Large scale strategies were able to accomplish more when they had a solid plan in place *before* the request for proposals arrived at the door. As a wise person once said, money means work: consider what work needs to be accomplished and then ask for the money to support the work.

Lesson Three: Small is beautiful. Grant projects that aim at one or two strategic advances and work to make incremental advances were able to see significant results. Some schools chose to hire one person to work on one project; some schools chose to partner with a few congregations or one middle church body; some chose to work on one issue with one set of partners. In other words, schools with small grant projects (embedded within the school's larger strategy) began by working with a few key people to build relationships so that institutional partnerships could evolve, and they placed the right people in key positions who have gone on to become change agents in the system. Generally, they had an easier time managing the grant.

What's best, then, large or small grants? *Lesson Four: Right-sized projects have the greatest success and impact.* Large, medium, or small grants are all good and can each have a tremendous impact on the institution and project participants. What matters most is that the size of the project matches the capacities of the school, that the project does not overreach and strain the school's capacities, nor that it be too small so as not to make room for creative thinking, trials, and adjustments. Good grants have a kind of institutional integrity, which matters far more than the budget total.

Creating energy and focus around a key issue is an important strategy: get people's attention and hold it. It takes tremendous work to do both, but grantees could feel and see the system shift ever so slightly if they persisted long enough. A few seminaries faced significant internal changes during the grant period, including a change of president, accreditation visits from ATS, and turnover in faculty, all of which consume time and energy and make it difficult to keep up with grant-related activities. Turnover is a significant issue in seminaries as well as denominations. For example, nearly half of the forty-five schools hired a new president or academic dean during the course of the grant period.

One successful way to garner attention by the seminary community and its supporters is by creating a center or institute. Centers allow the seminary to get people's attention, both inside and outside the school. It becomes a focused opportunity for fundraising and a way for university-based seminaries to receive funding through university structures. It can also be a vehicle for creating partnerships, especially with partners that are leery of the seminary and perceive the center or institute as an autonomous entity. For example, Chicago Theological Seminary's Center for Community Transformation is a nonprofit agency. The nonprofit status is an easier way to raise money for the

seminary, and congregations found it easier to enter a partnership with nonprofit than a seminary. Centers and institutes can be especially effective when their focus and energy are driven back into the institution and especially the curriculum. But if they become too separate from the school's day-to-day business, they run the risk of becoming parallel entities.

Being part of a grant program has added advantages for grantees: the opportunity to learn from others, enlarge the circle of conversation partners, and receive critique and counsel from others doing similar work. The Congregational Ministry Program grantees enjoyed participating in peer groups and an annual forum, though it did add more work onto their full agendas, which was not accounted for at the outset of the program. But all in all, peer-learning by theological educators proved more beneficial than problematic. In fact, many grantees boast of "stealing" good ideas from other schools, which they would not have pursued if they weren't in dialogue with each other. A successful program breeds success—when other schools hear about it, it is common that they are soon replicating successful strategies.

Applicants expressed appreciation to Lilly Endowment both for the size of the grants made available and for pressing them to address vital questions about seminary education in relationship to congregational ministry. Because of the substantial size and flexibility of the grants, seminaries will be able to strengthen their MDiv programs more quickly and more thoroughly than would have been the case without such assistance. The program stimulated schools to address structurally important, though often neglected, issues facing theological education in a complex and changing environment. In addition to financial support for individual schools, the results show that Lilly Endowment has also assisted church leaders in thinking strategically about their institutions by supporting research that provides them with valuable information and by supporting effective leadership education programs.

Building capacities and making connections

Partnerships matter. Building partnerships proved to be a key strategy for Congregational Ministry Program grantees, but for most it was uncharted territory. It has taken a long time for seminaries and the church to become separate entities and a long time for feeder systems to disintegrate—reversing or changing these trends does not happen overnight. As Phillips Theological Seminary discovered, judicatory officials relate to the seminary, but they are not necessarily connected to each other or to all the congregations—the seminary becomes the point in which people across congregations and several judicatories can come together. Obviously partnerships work for seminaries if there is someone assigned to pay attention to the partnership; if the relationship is understaffed, it won't work. Project leaders found they had to go out and "hustle" partnerships by visiting churches and meeting with pastors and the congregation repeatedly.

Congregations proved viable partners for theological schools in relationship to recruitment, field education, and assisting new graduates in transitioning into ministry. In other words, there is evidence that seminaries found congregations that could assist them in moving forward on their strategies.

The most effective strategy was to enter a conversation with congregational leaders *listening* for what the congregation needed, what one president called the blank-legal-pad approach: tell us what your needs are and we will try to develop programs to respond. A partnership was born if the seminary had resources to assist the congregation.

Listening, serving, and responding to congregational needs are the most viable ways for seminaries to build the seminary-congregation partnership. Many congregations can be suspicious of seminaries: pastors know the seminary by their presidents who are seeking gifts and donations or field education directors who are seeking a site for a student. In most cases, it has been the seminary asking for something from the congregation.

Several seminaries reversed that pattern and asked congregations: What can we do to help you strengthen your ministry and mission? When the seminary provided catechetical materials, preaching aids, or teachers and preachers around issues of vocational call and discernment, congregations *used* the materials and developed ongoing programs with the assistance of the seminary. The engagement between seminary and congregation happened around a core issue for all Christian communities—one that both institutions share together—but seminaries did not cast it in too narrow of terms. Wesley Theological Seminary, for example, did not ask the congregation: help us recruit people into ordained ministry, but rather, what can we do to help you promote a "culture of the call" in your congregation. Bethel Seminary found a tool that had immediate benefit to the congregation that enabled people to understand their leadership gifts. According to Bethel, "we never say to a church you need to partner with us, but rather we'd like to serve your leadership needs."

Partnerships with denominational organizations, particularly middle church bodies, proved difficult—many church leaders expressed interest, desire, and enthusiasm for the partnership with the seminary but could offer little to help support the effort. For example, Catholic dioceses do not recruit lay ministers; most of their efforts are focused on priesthood candidates. Yet even efforts to work with diocesan vocation directors, as Saint Meinrad's noted, proved difficult because of high turnover and directors working more than one job. Catholic schools sponsored by religious orders generally experience strong connections and support from the community, but most communities, because of dwindling membership, do not have financial or human resources to offer the seminary. As each religious community supports fewer and fewer parishes, the lay graduates have less and less connection to their parishes. Dioceses do not have systems or resources to aid the seminary in placing students. Lay ministers become free agents in an open market.

In many cases partnerships were uneven and unequal. The Jesuit School knew at the outset that a commitment to working in the West Oakland Deanery meant serving in a resource-poor environment. Seattle University experienced tremendous cooperation from judicatory officials but not much dependability. Seattle witnessed at least 80 percent turnover in judicatory leadership in five years.

What benefits accrue from partnerships for the partners? Following on Robert Putnam's now famous idea of social capital, one way to identify the

benefits is to describe the various kinds of capital that are built up through partnerships. I think seminaries develop three kinds of capital when they form partnerships with congregations and other church organizations: social, systems, and intellectual capital. Social capital refers to the kind and quality of human relationships that are formed and the bonds that develop over time because of the personal interchange that takes place between persons. Strong partnerships are formed because people come to know and trust one another; they learn something about each other that builds a base for ongoing dialogue and work. Chicago Theological Seminary was able to overcome the suspicion of pastors by being a steady presence week-in and week-out at the churches—and this included the project director and faculty regularly attending Sunday worship services. People are more willing to do more work in order to work together, which is what partnerships usually mean, if they think the work will make a real difference. Organizations—particularly church organizations—cannot build partnerships without significant personal relationships—building social capital—as the starting point.

Partnerships between ecclesial organizations also build up the church system. Systems capital, then, refers to the kind of connectedness between organizations that so many seminaries have seen wane—connections to camps, high schools, parishes and congregations, hospitals, social service agencies, middle church bodies, and national church bodies. In several instances, the seminary has become a catalyst in building systems capital, in many ways functioning in place of other parts of the system—gathering pastors and campus ministers, or social ministers and judicatory officials, or youth ministers and church leaders—conversations between different players in different parts of the system that don't necessarily take place.

The seminary also builds up intellectual capital for the church. It would be difficult to write a report on theological education and not refer to H. Richard Niebuhr's definition of the seminary as the intellectual center of the church. The seminary builds up intellectual capital for the church by learning from ministers and, in turn, critically reflecting upon ministry and faith in all its dimensions and contexts. And it does so by providing biblical, historical, ethical, and theological wisdom to help communities and their leaders discern faithful forms of witness, worship, and service.

Partnerships are forged when intellectual capital is at the service of the congregation and denomination—when scholars go to work on important questions facing communities, offer church leaders helpful diagnoses of the situation, and theological frameworks for thinking about ecclesial and social issues. Partnerships are further strengthened when people are invited to think together about the meaning and implications of research findings.

But building up intellectual capital for the church is the role of <u>both</u> the congregation and the seminary. In fact, a thriving church requires that all ecclesial organizations be intellectual centers for the church, a point Niebuhr missed. Congregations play a central role because they are the primary place of education and formation and in that regard congregations generate intelligence for the whole community. Seminaries need to take seriously the knowledge and wisdom that resides in congregations by both pastors and members, just

as congregations are invited to learn from the research, writing, and teaching generated by seminary teachers and leaders. The church would surely benefit if mutual learning was at the heart of the partnership between congregations and seminaries.

Expanding opportunities for theological education. The primary way seminaries provide education for ministry is through graduate-level MDiv degree programs; many also offer two-year masters-level pastoral ministry degrees and doctor of ministry degrees beyond the MDiv. One concern emerging among theological educators is whether other forms of education need to be developed along side the MDiv degree. In some denominations, such as the United Methodist, such options have been available for some time. Many UMC pastors participate in course-of-study programs in order to be licensed as a local pastor. Most programs take place in the summer, and there are a growing number of Spanish programs offered for Hispanic ministers.

In the Catholic community, the majority of lay ministers are trained in diocesan-sponsored ministry formation programs, which may or may not carry college credit. Likewise, diaconate candidates are not being trained in seminaries, but in diocesan-based programs. In the case of Newman College in western Canada, the lay MDiv program proved too demanding for candidates who lived a far distance and could only attend part time. The schools determined that a BTh degree offered online, with two month-long summer sessions on campus was more amenable to these students and would guarantee high retention and graduation rates.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary responded to its denomination's need for ministers by developing a program of study for bi-vocational pastors, which consists of thirty undergraduate credits over three years. The seminary designed the program with area congregations so the local churches had a commitment and stake in its success; the seminary is responsible for delivering the academic content and spiritual formation for ministry.

In addition to offering undergraduate or certificate programs, schools are exploring with offering the MDiv program at a different site. Union PSCE, for example, is offering the MDiv degree at an extension site in Charlotte, North Carolina, where a majority of African-American candidates can attend. Luther Seminary is also developing distant sites in western states where the congregation becomes the residence for theological education. Again students are able to do up to two years of the MDiv curriculum online and attend some courses at a site not far from home. Fuller Theological Seminary has developed a full-service extension site in Phoenix, Arizona.

Many schools want to prepare ministers to serve the growing ethnic diversity within the Christian community. But most realize that recruiting into the traditional MDiv program will not be the route to ministry education for many Hispanic, Korean, Vietnamese, and other ethnic immigrant groups, at least in the immediate future. Providing other viable options for these ministers and their communities will be an important service seminaries can provide—such opportunities can uphold the vision of educated congregational leaders.

Seminaries cannot be viewed as elite institutions that are unresponsive to the different levels and needs for ministry preparation. What is becoming

clear in many denominations is that there are a growing number of people leading congregations as ministers who do not have an MDiv degree, who do not plan to get an MDiv degree, and who do not have the time, money, or educational background to fulfill the requirements for the MDiv. How is theological education responding to the educational needs of these ministers? Can seminaries afford to ignore these students because they do not fit the MDiv profile? Should the seminary expand training for ministry outside the MDiv through undergraduate credit or certificate programs or partner more intentionally with those organizations that do? Certificate programs or undergraduate programs may or may not serve as a feeder into the MDiv degree or graduate studies, so seminaries will need to determine, according to their own ecclesial traditions, what kind of competence is necessary for different levels of training in ministry—from the most basic to the most advanced.

Expanding educational opportunities for training in ministry does not need to diminish the priority of the MDiv degree, which most denominations require for ordained ministers. Seminaries are obviously in a difficult position. On the one hand, there are those theological educators who claim that the MDiv should be expanded beyond its current three-years in order to better train students who come to seminary with little theological background. On the other hand, seminaries are being asked to provide training that is not at the standard of the MDiv program and not at the Masters-degree level. It is difficult for many seminaries to respond to that demand after working so long and hard to establish graduate education as the norm in their denomination. Most seminaries work according to the premise that ministry demands high-quality education at the graduate level. Of course, seminaries do not have the luxury of being all things to all people, so determining what kinds of educational programs the seminary can provide in addition to the MDiv, and what kinds of programs denominational partners should provide, will be an ongoing question facing church leaders in the future.

Part Three: Conclusion

Congregations serving seminaries

> *Perhaps pastoral imagination is really Christian imagination, the ability to see eschatologically, to see with eyes of the heart enlightened. I think of my academic training in the close reading of a text and realize that I still do that, but the text is not simply the scripture or a theologian. The text is also the congregation. My job in the preaching moment is to read our lives as a community and reflect it back through the lens of faith. To claim our broken bodies as God's.*
>
> Lillian Daniel

Congregations are the frontline of the church's mission in the world. Consider, for instance, what happened nationally and globally in the past five years as the Congregational Grants Program was underway. On September 11, 2001, U.S. citizens experienced an unprecedented attack on New York City that has

resulted in a war on terrorism, a war in Iraq, and increasing measures to secure the nation. The U.S. economy underwent significant changes from the strong gains enjoyed in the 1990s, which effected nearly every nonprofit organization small and large. Clergy sexual abuse and the status of homosexual persons as ministers and in legal unions were two issues that caused significant pain, confusion, and questioned the credibility of church leaders. The list could go on.

What is important is that congregations, their ministers and members, have to make sense of these realities every week—a minister has to preach the Gospel in light of the signs of the times, but much of what is taking place in the lives of American Christians is unfolding rapidly and with consequences that few can imagine. The national and world events remind theological educators that the church needs wise and prudent leaders who can help Christian communities remain united in Christ no matter what differences seem to divide the body.

Ministers are frequently referred to as the last generalist among the professions, and, indeed, they require the capacity and sensitivity necessary for working with individuals, families, and communities along a continuum that runs from more ordinary life events to extreme crises. And as Rev. Daniel notes, ministers are required to interpret a multiplicity of texts. They must be well-grounded in the texts of the tradition—Scriptures, creeds, theologies, liturgies, and doctrines—and able to understand and interpret the "living human document" that is each person's life and experience as well as the "living community document," the unique text that is the congregation. Ministers must be able to understand the factors that shape a congregation's story and practices with attention to the dynamics for life-giving patterns as well as destructive habits.

Ministers must be able to read the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other, as Karl Barth noted, in order to be keen interpreters of culture and wise judges of what faith means in particular cultural conditions. Ministers are looked upon to answer questions about meaning and purpose, most importantly the question "why?" They are supposed to know something about the mysterious reality of God and be able to interpret how God's purposes are expressed in symbol, narrative, and experience. And, they are even supposed to know something about what's beyond earthly existence. From the soul to the text, from the earthly community to the eschaton, from the boiler in the church basement to the prophetic stance against injustice, ministers are required to know and do a great deal beyond the ordinary.

If congregations are the frontline of the church's mission in the world, congregations can best serve seminaries by helping seminaries understand the ways Christians are making sense of what faithfulness means in our times. If ministers engage in serious reflection on the ways multiple texts are being understood and interpreted in the congregation and they share those reflections with theological educators, they will be serving both the congregation and the seminary by building the intellectual capital of both communities.

Seminaries serving congregations

> *Many of us enter the ministry thinking that we are entering a world of ideas, when really it is such an earthy calling. Nothing in my training could have prepared me, a person who once had the luxury of fainting at the sight of blood, for all that time in hospitals. . . . Nothing could have prepared me for how terribly earthy the ministry is; how incarnational.*
>
> Lillian Daniel

The truth is that much of what ministers do on a daily basis the seminary did not educate them to do. Seminaries cannot prepare ministers for every eventuality that comes along. Ministry is too complex a practice. Seminaries should tell their graduates honestly that there is more to learn, but they should not apologize about that truth. Rather seminaries can invite ministers into a lifelong journey of learning *from* the ministry and helping others, especially their seminary professors, to understand the beautiful, the ordinary, and the holy that are part of every minister's work. Learning beyond the seminary can happen best for those ministers who receive an excellent education in the seminary.

Seminaries will serve congregations best by listening to congregations and being intentional about understanding and critiquing what is happening in congregations. In light of what they know about congregations, seminaries will be more able to create resources for congregations. Seminaries will serve congregations if they are seen as reliable and credible partners—part of the solution, not part of the problem. What Congregational Ministry Program grantees learned is that the work is intensive, it can be frustrating and emotionally exhausting at times, but it is also the work of faith that involves courage, risk, and, at times, sacrifice.

But seminaries have to do more than just think about congregations in their immediate context. Seminaries are also charged with thinking about the Christian life, the biblical, historical, theological, and ethical dimensions of faith that include aspects of the past and present that are not immediately connected to today's situation or at least don't appear to be immediately relevant. And congregations need seminaries to be communities of learning that honor and embrace rigorous scholarship on matters beyond congregations and current events.

As noted above, both seminaries and congregations need each other to be communities of learning, places where rigorous understanding, critique, and exploration are habits of mind cultivated by compassionate and smart leaders. Both congregations and seminaries would be strengthened *as* congregations and seminaries if they were more able to engage in mutual giving and receiving, a posture of openness, gratitude, and humility in the face of what can be learned from the other. It is not difficult to see that the Congregational Ministry Program has taken several steps in the direction of strengthening both congregations and seminaries to serve one another.

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Appendix A

Congregational Ministry Program Grantees
January 1, 1999–December 31, 2003

1. Andover Newton Theological School
2. Aquinas Institute of Theology
3. Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond
4. Bethel Seminary of Bethel University
5. Bexley Hall Seminary
6. Boston University School of Theology
7. Candler School of Theology of Emory University
8. Chicago Theological Seminary
9. Church Divinity School of the Pacific
10. Claremont School of Theology
11. Eastern Mennonite Seminary of Eastern Mennonite University
12. Eden Theological Seminary
13. Franciscan School of Theology
14. Fuller Theological Seminary
15. Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
16. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
17. Hood Theological Seminary
18. Howard University School of Divinity
19. Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley
20. Lancaster Theological Seminary
21. Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
22. Luther Seminary
23. Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary
24. Moravian Theological Seminary
25. Newman Theological College
26. Northern Baptist Theological Seminary
27. Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
28. Payne Theological Seminary
29. Perkins School of Theology Southern Methodist University
30. Phillips Theological Seminary
31. Regent College
32. Sacred Heart Major Seminary
33. St. John's University School of Theology–Seminary
34. Saint Meinrad's School of Theology
35. Saint Paul School of Theology
36. St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary
37. Seabury-Western Theological Seminary
38. Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry
39. Talbot School of Theology of Biola University
40. Trinity Lutheran Seminary
41. Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education
42. University of Dubuque Theological Seminary
43. Wartburg Theological Seminary
44. Washington Theological Union
45. Wesley Theological Seminary

Appendix B

Program to Enhance Theological School's Capacities to Prepare Candidates for Congregational Ministry

Program description

Few issues are more important to the Christian churches in North America than the quality of pastoral leadership. Though there are certainly many persons of real ability ministering in congregations and parishes, there is nonetheless a remarkable consensus among Christians—Protestant as well as Catholic, evangelical as well as mainline—about the critical need to draw even more highly qualified candidates to the ministry and to educate them more appropriately for their ministries.

Although this is surely an issue that can and should engage the energies of all agencies of the church, Lilly Endowment believes that theological schools can play a distinctive role in strengthening the Christian ministry. In an effort to encourage particularly creative initiatives from theological schools, Lilly Endowment will, in 1998, award major grants to those North American theological schools that design and propose the most promising projects that address the strengthening of the Christian ministry. Because the Endowment believes that to improve congregational ministry there must be both better students and better theological schools, this grants program aims to assist those institutions best prepared to make strategic advance to improve their institution's capacity to better prepare the next generation of congregational or parish ministers.

Eligibility

Every theological school fully accredited by The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada is eligible to apply for a grant in this program. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to support projects that hold the best promise of improving the quality of the Christian ministry.

Many kinds of projects might be proposed, and Lilly Endowment has no preconceived opinions about what kinds of efforts will best address this issue. Some seminary leaders, for example, have suggested that the lack of sufficient fundraising capacity to provide adequate financial aid to prospective students has a direct bearing on the quality of their students, while others have suggested that the physical condition of their schools' facilities inhibit them from attracting the most able candidates. Some theological school leaders believe that developing creative relationships with clusters of congregations, with regional church judicatories or with church-related undergraduate institutions can open doors to new and better recruitment practices, while others feel that they should develop or strengthen cooperative programs with other seminaries in their denomination or region in order to address common aims. Some seminaries may wish to concentrate on fashioning a new curriculum or on ef-

forts for faculty development, while others will want to pay more attention to programs of spiritual formation for their students. Grants for these and other promising ways of working to improve their graduates' capacities to lead congregations will be supported from this program. In keeping with Lilly Endowment policy, no grants will be awarded for endowment or other permanent fund purposes.

Though a wide range of projects can and will be supported, only those seminaries that are able to present a convincing and compelling case for how the proposed project will significantly improve the Christian ministry will receive grant support.

Projects may vary in length from one to five years, and grants will be awarded in the $400,000 to $1,500,000 range. Since the Endowment has allocated up to $40 million in grants for this initiative, it stands ready to support a significant number of promising proposals.

Criteria

For a proposal to be successful, it should include all the following elements:

1. A full discussion of the institution's analysis of the current state of congregational/parish ministry within the church public it serves.

2. A discussion of the ways that the institution has deliberately attempted to address the state of the ministry in the recent past and a description of how the proposed effort will be informed by that experience. If other agencies of the church have been the institution's partners in past work on this issue, the proposal should discuss these collaborative efforts and how the proposed program will build on this shared activity.

3. A detailed description of the proposed project together with a timeline that relates clearly to the project's goals and budget.

4. A realistic appraisal of the problems that the institution would expect to face in implementing the proposed project. The Endowment recognizes that almost all important ventures involve some risk and uncertainty, and therefore a proposal will be strengthened if it contains evidence that those responsible for implementing it have given realistic attention to the obstacles that might inhibit a project from fully realizing its objectives.

5. A statement that explains how the proposed project will strategically enhance the institution's capacity to prepare better congregational ministers and the rationale behind choosing this particular course of action.

6. A clear statement of the outcomes of the program. Each applicant should state the results for which it expects to be held accountable.

In doing so, it should articulate specific goals in clear and measurable terms. It should also provide an evaluation design that describes the process by which the program's effectiveness will be assessed.

7. A description of the persons who will be responsible for the implementation of the proposal. Describe how their training and experience prepares them for the work of this project.

8. If the proposed project involves cooperation with one or more other institutions (for instance, with clusters of congregations, with other seminaries, with a denominational office, with a church-related college, etc.) evidence must be submitted that each participant has a genuine interest in the proposal. The evidence can be in the form of letters or statements of support from the leaders of the other institutions or agencies involved.

9. A full and detailed budget for the proposed project.

10. Either a plan for the post-grant financing of this new endeavor or a persuasive discussion of why this plan will not require support at the end of the grant period. The Endowment hopes to avoid aiding programs that will not survive when the Endowment's funding is terminated.

11. The proposal should be signed by the theological school's chief executive officer and chief financial officer. In the case of freestanding schools, the proposal should also be signed by the chair of the school's board; in the case of university-related divinity schools, by the appropriate senior university administrator.

ENDNOTES

1. Lillian Daniel, "Minute Fifty Four," *What is Good Ministry? Resources to Launch a Discussion*, eds. Jackson W. Carroll and Carol E. Lytch (Durham, NC: Pulpit and Pew Research Reports, 2003).

2. The Endowment supports The Association of Theological Schools, the accrediting agency for theological schools, and the Fund for Theological Education, an organization committed to supporting excellence in ministry. For a list of other organizations, with links to their Web sites, supported by the Religion Division related to pastoral leadership development, see the Web site, www.lillyendowment.org/religion.

3. Many of the projects funded by Lilly Endowment's Religion Division, including research in congregational studies and resources for congregations, can be found at the Web site, *Resources for American Christianity*, www.resourcingchristianity.org.

4. Jackson Carroll and Barbara Wheeler developed six categories to classify theological schools: evangelical Protestant (denominational or independent), mainline Protestant (denominational or independent), peace church, and Roman Catholic.

5. Appendix A contains a list of the forty-five grantees in the Congregational Ministry Program.

Reflections on the Agency of Theological Schools: A Response to the Strengthening Congregational Ministry Summary Report

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Introduction

In 1998, Lilly Endowment placed an extraordinary wager on its belief that "theological schools can play a distinctive role in strengthening the Christian ministry" and that there were indeed schools "prepared to make strategic advance to improve their institution's capacity to better prepare the next generation of congregational or parish ministers."[1] Kathleen Cahalan's report testifies to the fruitfulness of this wager, not only for the schools directly involved but also for the wider systems and networks engaged by the initiative. And now the publication of her observant summary and sharp analysis promise to extend and expand the impact by serving as a resource for further reflection, planning, and strategic advance.

This brief response will highlight what I see to be the very considerable implications of this report for the work, identity, and vocation of theological schools. Since there is not space to be exhaustive, I will limit attention to eight implications I believe are of greatest interest and importance: those that help us think about the agency of theological schools in their ecclesial environments. The goal is quite the opposite of having the last word; rather, it is to invite the reader's own participation in the conversation that Lilly Endowment opened, the grant recipients vigorously developed, and Cahalan so insightfully extends.[2]

Theological schools can and should exercise agency that changes their ecclesial environments.

While many of the individual projects undertaken in this grant program could at first glance be interpreted simply in terms of schools seeking to do a better job in their ordinary tasks of recruiting and preparing candidates for ministry (that is, being more effective actors within a well understood and stable system), Cahalan is correct in seeing something much more remarkable. These schools, to varying but significant degrees, all intentionally acted *on* their surrounding environment. This is perhaps most clear in the case of those projects that aimed to enlist congregational and institutional partners in rebuilding a "culture of call," reconnecting a broad and rich ecology of discernment that presents schools with a significantly altered and improved situation for recruitment of excellent candidates for ministry. Environmental change was also a necessary feature of those projects that aimed to shift prac-

tice from a pattern of field education largely disconnected from the rest of the life of the school to contextual education, which brings the faculty into more direct contact with congregational realities and dialogue with ministers and parish leaders. For in addition to changing the school, this altered the location and work of the supervising ministers and their congregations, bringing them much closer to the schools as they became, in effect, fellow faculty in a theological curriculum and co-investigators of the challenges, shortcomings, and possibilities of ministry in specific contexts.

These schools accomplished an impressive amount of environmental change, especially when we consider the short time frame of the initiatives and the schools' human and financial resources relative to the scale of the ecclesial systems involved. Perhaps even more impressive is how little "push-back" they encountered, how seldom their efforts were seen as misguided or unwelcome by others. Even in cases where schools experienced more of the limits than the possibilities for environmental change (such as in their efforts to bring more underrepresented persons into degree programs and to develop a new culture of theological education for lay church professionals), their attempts to exercise environment-altering agency were much more often welcomed than dismissed or resented. What this indicates, I believe, is that faculties, administrations, and governing boards of North American theological schools would do well to reflect deeply on their institutional capacity for agency and to consider whether and how they are being called to exercise it in this historical moment.

Theological schools best exercise agency by being what they most fundamentally are: learning communities.

One of the recurring themes of Cahalan's report is how thoroughly academic the grant projects were. Shaped by pre-programmatic research and deliberation on the current state of ministry, they relied heavily on the familiar strategies of convening conversations, creating and adjusting course plans and curricula, engaging new faculty, producing teaching materials, developing varieties of consortial relationships, and concluded with assessment, reporting, and journal articles. This scholarly approach had the obvious advantage of making it possible for the schools to lead with strength by putting their already existing primary assets effectively and immediately to work. It also had the not inconsiderable benefit of facilitating faculty buy-in. Most important of all, however, this academic style appears to be very well suited to exercising agency in current social and ecclesial environments.

This is not to deny the reality of either the "credibility gap" between seminaries and congregations or the disconnection with judicatories and other institutions Cahalan reports as common challenges identified by the schools.[3] The experience of these grant projects indicates, however, that schools have the capacity to close the credibility gap and to reconnect with a wide variety of church leaders and institutions *precisely by living out their identity as learning communities*. Indeed, the academic practices of careful observation and study, rigorous thought, imaginative construction and open discussion are particu-

larly valuable to the church in a time of great change and instability in patterns of congregational life and leadership, not to mention the surrounding culture. For they hold out the potential for rediscovered resources, new possibilities, honest and flexible experimentation, renewed connections, and an opening to the development of fresh consensus and common work.

Theological schools cannot exercise agency without themselves being deeply changed.

The fact that a person is acting out of her or his basic identity does not mean exemption from radical change (indeed, there are numerous biblical texts that testify to the former positively requiring the latter). The same holds true for theological schools. This is not simply a matter of the inevitable subsequent change of one's situation and history that results from any exercise of agency; there is internal change required *prior* to effective agency in the current environment.

Cahalan points to necessary changes in both the *capacities* and the *culture* of a school. Concerning capacities, she notes that in addition to those that have long been and continue to be essential for excellent theological education (strong leadership, faculty, students, finances, and infrastructure), schools have discovered the need for capacities to build partnerships that reconnect fragmented ecclesial systems, to spark and nurture interest in ministry, to increase the reach of theological education through new programming and modes of access, and to do their work in a pluralistic social and ecclesial environment.[4] While these new capacities are not in contradiction or even intrinsic tension with those long understood as essential, the simple fact that their development requires significant new work is sufficient to create significant institutional stress. Because theological schools are nearly universally resource-light and mission-heavy, new work is naturally seen as a potential diffusion of effort, a risky bet of scarce institutional capital. What is even more significant, the new capacities all involve not only new work but new relationships and responsibilities for the school in its ecclesial setting. Taken together they place the school in a new situation. For many decades theological schools have typically played a highly (and even increasingly) specific and defined role in the life of North American Christianity: that is, educating degree candidates in a relatively stable set of disciplines widely held to be important preparation for church leadership. The schools received these candidates from and released their graduates into ecclesial systems for which the schools had little or no explicit responsibility. For schools now to assume responsibilities in tending to the health and productivity of the ecclesial culture and institutional ecology that cultivates potential candidates, in attempting to meet leadership education needs that are not easily (or even at all) addressed through traditional degree course work, and in paying close attention to what actually happens when their graduates enter ministry—this is a deep, even tectonic, shift.

These new capacities also require important alterations in the culture of a school. As a learning community, a theological school presents a complex conversation. And so its culture is largely defined by two things: who the primary

interlocutors are and what count as the essential subjects of their conversation. There are changes in both as a school develops the new capacities necessary to exercise agency. In the case of who has voice, the circle expands out from its current faculty and students to include ministers, lay leaders, and key personnel at existing and potential partner institutions. In terms of the subject matter for conversation, the concrete challenges of congregations/parishes and of Christians in their daily lives move from being one topic among others to being a continually present and urgent concern that focuses theological reflection.[5] In addition, the effects of the school's conversation and ancillary activity both on the ministry of its graduates and on its environment necessarily become a primary focus for analysis and deliberation. Neither of these shifts in subject matter constitutes a move away from the proper character of a theological school: theological activity has always found its deepest motivation in the challenges faced by the church; a learning community can exercise agency legitimately only when it is attentive to and thoughtful about what its effects actually are. Likewise widening the circle of conversation partners is entirely in keeping with the open-textured character and universal horizon of a genuine learning community. And yet the changes in a school's culture required by agency are sharp enough easily to trigger internal resistance. Any school considering moving toward increased agency should pay careful attention to Cahalan's wise counsel to engage the primary keepers of the school's culture—its faculty—as early as possible in planning processes, to move only when key faculty are ready to take the lead, and to structure the work so as to let the faculty put their best skills and practices to fullest use.[6] This is more than prudence for avoiding paralyzing institutional conflict; it describes the way learning communities can step out into their environments and act—and do so precisely as learning communities.

Theological schools exercise agency very effectively when they draw into closer relationship with congregations as fellow learning communities.

Cahalan returns to this theme time and again in her report.[7] Giving the lie to those who believe that the credibility gap between theological schools and congregations is a natural and fixed gulf, she highlights the significant accomplishments of schools that worked carefully and systematically to make connections.

What we learn from the experience of these schools is the importance of leading with listening—and then continuing to listen. Congregational leaders, while wary of yet another round of prepackaged advice and/or an attempt to enlist their resources for someone else's project, were very open to sharing their concrete challenges and to letting the schools know what they saw their congregational needs to be. Grant planners and faculty congregational researchers—and perhaps most of all those faculty involved in contextual education programs that brought faculty, students, ministers, and congregants together in extended interaction—found this listening not only informative but richly stimulating for their own thinking and work. As relationships de-

veloped, conversations could become more deeply collegial with frank give and take.

What is especially striking is how natural and mutually valuable these relationships and conversations apparently came to be, how they were encounters not between a learning community and some other sort of entity but between two learning communities that, in their meeting, enriched each other. They provide good evidence for the validity and importance of Cahalan's correction of H. R. Niebuhr's definition of the seminary as the intellectual center of the church: "In fact, a thriving church requires that all ecclesial organizations be intellectual centers for the church, a point Niebuhr missed. . . . The church would surely benefit if mutual learning was at the heart of the partnership between congregations and seminaries."[8] In this mutual learning, the different social locations and primary purposes of congregations and theological schools entail distinctions between their primary gifts (congregations bringing the concrete wisdom of present communities of faith; theological schools tending the treasury of wisdom available from communities of other times and places and asking questions and offering resources easily overlooked in the press of the present). But these two kinds of wisdom belong together—and can even delight in each other. When they do, both schools and congregations gain expanded capacity for agency as their intellectual, social, and institutional capital grows.[9] What is more, the wider ecclesial environment in and on which they can exercise that agency is changed already by the newly formed relationships.

Theological schools seeking to exercise and expand agency should consider developing a cadre of ministers and lay leaders to function as wider faculty.

Cahalan makes a convincing case that theological schools have much to gain by drawing closer to congregations as fellow learning communities. The account of the contextual education projects in particular shows the value of drawing so close to a congregation that its ministers and lay leaders become in effect part of a "wider faculty," both in the sense of persons who add to the teaching resources of the school for the education of its students and in the sense of joining the faculty as fellow investigators and interlocutors in the conversation at the heart of the school.[10] But how are theological schools to have significant partnerships with more than a very limited set of congregations? A school has need of only so many contextual education sites; the core faculty has only so many hours in the day; regular travel to distant congregations is prohibitively expensive.

Theological schools could settle, of course, for having close relationships with only a few highly select (and almost always very proximate) congregations, and therefore with only a few wider faculty. But this would be problematic on two serious counts. First of all, schools that restricted their relationships in this way would be cutting themselves off from the particularities of the distinct contexts of the vast majority of congregations with potential to relate to the school. Perhaps even more significant would be the lost opportu-

nity to engage more ministers and lay leaders as wider faculty. For the greater the number of wider faculty, the more the teaching resources of the school expand, the richer its central conversation can become, and the more hospitable the ecclesial environment becomes to the activity of learning communities.

Might there be then other programmatic efforts in which to enlist wider faculty in addition to contextual education? In light of Cahalan's report and some current discussions and experiments, there seem to be at least three promising sorts of work: improving continuing education (especially for new ministers), increasing access to theological education for ministry, and lay theological education. In the first case, theological schools could consider at least two strategies: identifying, preparing and regularly debriefing supervisor/mentors who work with individual new ministers (or likely even better, cohorts of them); identifying and employing ministers and lay leaders to act in effect as local leaders of continuing education courses in which the major content is delivered by a theological school via some form of distance technology and in which the wider faculty lead discussions face to face and/or online. These same two strategies can be employed for the work of increasing access to potential degree and certificate program candidates for whom geographical or cultural distance from residential campus is otherwise too great a barrier. In the case of theological education for laity, theological schools can identify wider faculty and convene them in regional lay schools and online teaching networks that make possible what is all too rarely experienced by the vast majority of congregational members: curricular learning in cohorts.

In these (or any other) programmatic efforts that multiply the wider faculty of a school, it is important that these persons be understood as more than teaching assistants; that through reporting, consultation, and occasions for mutual deliberation, they be regular and significant participants in the conversation at the heart of the school. Only so will the school gain their wisdom; only so will the school most fully expand its capacity for agency.

The agency of theological schools will be greatly enhanced if the capacity of other partners in the ecclesial environment can be strengthened.

A recurring theme in Cahalan's report is how the efforts of theological schools to exercise agency were limited by the weakness of the surrounding systems. This observation is worth very close attention. In a current ecclesial situation, it may well be that the theological schools are the institutions in the best position to strengthen Christian ministry, but that does not mean they have an open field of action. Indeed, the effective agency of theological schools can increase only as the capacities and agency of congregations and other ecclesial institutions grow.

Theological schools need to think very carefully, therefore, about where else in the ecclesial systems there are already important capacities and partners, where they might be developed, and (most important of all) what efforts will best employ the particular and finite resources of both the school and its partners in making possible yet further strategic advance.

We have already discussed in the previous section how congregations and their leaders are promising partners that can become even stronger and more promising. There are also good reasons to continue to look for points of connection and common work with two sets of institutions—judicatories and colleges—that the grant schools often found challenging or even disappointing as partners. In the case of the former, it is interesting that Cahalan notes that one reason grant schools found it difficult to recruit ethnic candidates to their degree and certificate programs was that potential candidates chose to participate in judicatory-sponsored programs.[11] This apparent case of judicatory strength compared to theological schools suggests that schools might consider how they could draw into closer connection to the judicatory programs, looking for opportunities for mutual learning and cooperative and/or complementary programming. In the case of colleges, theological schools could consider how strategic cooperation in ethnic leadership development and theological education and reflection for laity might strengthen the colleges as institutions and, therefore, the hand of those at the colleges who have an interest in deeper partnership. I also strongly suspect that the major recent grant program that occasioned an extraordinary flowering of new college initiatives for lifting up the theme of vocation will have made it much easier now than in 1998 for theological schools to identify promising partners.

Theological schools seeking to exercise and expand their agency should consider what their roles are and what partnerships could be important in preparing congregational and institutional leaders for the changed ecclesial environment the schools are working to develop.

It is, of course, both pragmatically useful and morally imperative for a school to prepare its students for future changes it is trying to effect. Thus, if a school is working to develop a wider faculty, it would do well to consider how its students might already be given opportunity to begin preparing to take on that role. And if a less fragmented ecclesial environment is a goal, it is not sufficient for future ministers to take courses in congregational studies and to learn the intricacies of a denominational polity; they need opportunity to reflect on what it might mean to lead toward and within a healthier, more interwoven set of church institutions; they need an education that helps them develop not only as excellent individual leaders but as a connected and connective leadership.

In addition, schools should consider how to include more than their current students and faculty in such reflection. Should schools develop new certificate and/or degree programs that enroll ministers, judicatory, and institutional leaders with the goal of helping them develop capacities for leadership that furthers emerging and potential connections? What new research projects would be useful to ecclesial partners? What short- and long-term conversations could be hosted by schools?

It is not up to theological schools to take complete responsibility for all this education, all these conversations. Indeed, doing this work in partnership

with other ecclesial—and various types of academic—institutions could be far more effective. Theological schools have no natural monopoly on institutional connective wisdom. They do, however, appear to have a natural convening role as ecclesial learning communities.

Individual theological schools exercise agency more effectively when they do so as part of a learning community of peers.

Cahalan's report makes it clear that this large grant program was characterized by neither the unity of a single grand effort nor the sheer multiplicity of many individual initiatives. Rather it consisted of multiple experiments in parallel play. This not only made it possible for the overall project to test a variety of hypotheses, it also enabled the participant schools to learn from each other even while their experiments were underway and to adjust their approaches midstream. In addition, participation in a wider effort was greatly helpful to individual projects by enabling them to gain and sustain attention and traction in the ecclesial environment and even the wider culture. In this way, schools could undertake relatively small projects that fit their limited capacities and that at the same time could actually come to something.

In the end, this might be the most important overall learning of this grant program: how effectively and beneficially learning communities can exercise agency when they do so together in a community of discovery. This leaves theological schools, congregations, church judicatories, grantors, connective institutions (such as The Association of Theological Schools and the Fund for Theological Education), and others concerned with the future of Christian faith and life with a question that is both urgent and promising: what next steps can be taken to deepen and extend such community?

Jonathan P. Strandjord is the director for theological education in the vocation and education unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He serves on the board of trustees of The Fund for Theological Education.

ENDNOTES

1. Carol E. Lytch, ed., "Program to Enhance Theological School's Capacities to Prepare Candidates for Congregational Ministry" request for proposals in *2005 Forum, Summary Reports of Lilly Endowment Grant Programs* (Louisville, KY: The Fund for Theological Education, 2005), 90; within this volume, Appendix B, 112.

2. My reflection on the agency of theological schools has been sparked and fed not only by Cahalan's report but also by Carol Lytch's report on the Theological Programs for High School Youth in which she gives explicit attention to the topic of theological schools as change agents (*2005 Forum,* 32–35; within this volume, 34–36). In addition, conversations with my colleague Mark Wilhelm have been very important in shaping my thinking about agency in the contemporary North American church.

3. Kathleen A. Cahalan, "Strengthening Congregational Ministry: A Report on a Program to Enhance Theological Schools' Capacities to Prepare Candidates for Congregational Ministry, 1999–2003," in *2005 Forum, Summary Reports of Lilly Endowment Grant Programs* (Louisville, KY: The Fund for Theological Education, 2005), 49; within this volume, 68.

4. Cahalan, "Strengthening Congregational Ministry," 72; within this volume, 97.

5. Cahalan, "Strengthening Congregational Ministry," 58–61; within this volume, 79–83.

6. Cahalan, "Strengthening Congregational Ministry," 61, 63, 73–74; within this volume, 83, 85–86, 98–99.

7. Cahalan, "Strengthening Congregational Ministry," 50, 57–62, 77–78, 81–82; within this volume, 70, 79–84, 103–104, 107–109.

8. Cahalan, "Strengthening Congregational Ministry," 79; within this volume, 105–106.

9. For Cahalan's discussion, see "Strengthening Congregational Ministry," 78–79; within this volume, 104–105.

10. I borrow the phrase "wider faculty" from the late Timothy Lull who during his service as president of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary regularly spoke of the importance of developing such a cadre.

11. Cahalan, "Strengthening Congregational Ministry," 52–53, 79–80; within this volume, 72–73, 106–107.

The Churches and the Preparation of Candidates for Ministry

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ABSTRACT: The Association's Profiles of Ministry (PoM) program began in 1973–74 as Readiness for Ministry. It involved a major study of the expectations persons held for those beginning ordained ministry in the United States and Canada. Fifteen years later, in 1987–88, the study was repeated and again in 2003–05, marking the thirtieth anniversary study of the Profiles of Ministry program. In its third iteration, the program focused on a 330-item survey sent to a stratified random stage sample of ATS member school graduates, seminary faculty, senior seminarians, denominational leaders, and laity served by the graduates. This article, one of four focused on the findings of the thirty-year study, explores the similarities and differences in expectation for beginning clergy among seventeen denominational families. The responses provide distinctive points of view given to thirty-eight characteristics, traits, and sensitivities that the churches judge essential, helpful, or likely to impede a successful ministry in the congregations and parishes served by the seminaries and theological schools of ATS.

Throughout its history, The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) has focused sharply on the accreditation of graduate theological programs in the United States and Canada. It adopted standards for judging the quality of such programs in 1936 and established its first list of accredited schools in 1938. ATS now has 254 schools in its membership. Furthermore, while most of its member schools have historical ties to the denominations that established and supported them, more recently a number of schools have sprung to life within a broader interdenominational tradition, many of them evangelical seminaries.

The Association accredits schools, not denominations. Consequently, it has no juridical relationship with any denomination. Nevertheless, because the member schools engage in the preparation of men and women for ordained or called service within the churches of North America, there is a clear connection between what the churches expect of their theological school graduates and the preparation of these individuals through courses, seminars, and supervised ministry experiences while in seminary. That connection seems clearest in the Association's Profiles of Ministry program (PoM).

Originally named Readiness for Ministry, the PoM program began in 1973 and sought to systematically study the expectations of its member schools for the pastoral styles of newly minted seminary graduates. ATS specifically explored the characteristics, traits, sensitivities, and approaches that would foster good pastoral ministry and those that seemed likely to impede it. Key documents in the development and history of the research project are well documented in a recent article in this journal.[1]

The original study was followed by a second in 1987–88 and by a thirty-year study completed in 2005. The primary focus of this article is to trace the similarities and differences in the responses among the denominational families over this period and specifically to explore how the expectations within each of them may have remained the same or changed in the last thirty years. There are two essential preparatory notes. First, there have been some modest and helpful changes in the listing of the denominational families over the years of the project and, second, the framework for the analysis of data was changed with the revision of the research instruments in 1987–88.

Denominational families

The original research project in 1973–74 sought responses from denominational leaders, seminary faculty, senior seminarians, alumni/ae, and laity to a 444-item survey focused on characteristics that could be important to the success of young clergy in their congregations and parishes in North America. The 4,895 responses came from a random stratified stage sample drawn from the forty-seven denominations represented in ATS at that time.[2] Assignment of a school to a denominational family was done by ATS staff in light of their knowledge and experience with the schools of the Association.[3] This was modified slightly by a factor analysis of the responses after the questionnaires were returned. The list of denominational families was also adjusted in 1987–88 and again in 2003–05. (See Table 1.) The modifications in the list reflect in part the changes in the membership of the Association over the thirty years of research. Currently, for example, new seminaries have been established in the broader category of "Baptist Churches" and the number of respondents who chose "Unaffiliated/No Denomination" has grown in the intervening years.

Core clusters

In the original study, 1973–74, sixty-four clusters of characteristics emerged by a factor analysis of the questionnaire. Analysis of data by denominational family and published reports eventually focused on sixty key clusters. In the 1987–88 study, however, the clusters to be studied were limited to the thirty-five that had been incorporated either into the Stage I or Stage II assessment instruments.[4] In the same study, four additional sets of items were developed to reflect new emphases in ministry. Both of these decisions resulted in a change in the questionnaire sent to prospective participants. When the data were analyzed, three of the four were judged sufficiently robust to be included in subsequent editions of the Stage II Field Observation form. They are Support for Women in the Church (Cluster 81), Christian Spirituality (Cluster 82), and Concern for Social Justice (Cluster 84). The same schema was used in the 2003–05 study.

As a result of the differences in the number of clusters in the first and subsequent studies, a complete analysis across the thirty years of the study is impossible. It is possible, however, to make summary statements of the findings by each denominational family for each study and then to trace those common

Table 1
Denominational Families by Research Project

A Priori List 1973–1974	Factor Analysis List 1973–1974	Fifteen Year Study 1987–1988	Thirty Year Study 2003–2005
Anglican-Episcopal	Anglican-Episcopal	Anglican-Episcopal	Anglican-Episcopal
Canadian & American Baptist	Canadian & American Baptist	American-Canadian Baptist	American-Canadian Baptist
			Baptist Churches
Christian-Disciples	Christian Churches - Disciples	Christian Churches - Disciples	Christian Churches (Disciples and Non-Disciples)
	Christian (Not Disciples)	Christian (Not Disciples)	
Evangelicals	Evangelical A	Evangelical A	Evangelical A
	Evangelical B	Evangelical B	Evangelical B
Free Churches	Free Churches	Free Church	Free Church
Jewish	Jewish-Unitarian		
Lutheran	Lutheran	Lutheran	Lutheran
Orthodox	Orthodox	Orthodox	
Presbyterian-Reformed	Presbyterian-Reformed	Presbyterian-Reformed	Presbyterian Reformed
Roman Catholic Diocesan	Roman Catholic (Diocesan)	Roman Catholic	Roman Catholic/Orthodox
Roman Catholic Order	Roman Catholic (Order)		
Southern Baptist	Southern Baptist Convention	Southern Baptist	Southern Baptist
United Church of Canada	United Church of Canada	United Church of Canada	United Church of Canada
United Church of Christ	United Church of Christ	United Church of Christ	United Church of Christ
United Methodist	United Methodist	United Methodists	United Methodists
Others (outside ATS)			Other Denominations
Others (affiliated with ATS)			Unaffiliated/No Denomination

clusters through all three studies to see what has remained the same and what has changed. These two tasks form the heart of this article.

Summary of findings from each study

The original research in 1973–74

There were both personal qualities and ministerial functions in which there was high agreement across the seventeen denominational families. The personal qualities included three viewed as "Highly Important" and three considered "Most Detrimental."[5] The name of each cluster provides a sense of the overall meaning gleaned from the items that comprise it. The first group included items associated with Fidelity to Tasks and Persons, a Positive Approach (to ministry), and Flexibility of Spirit, while the detrimental group included Alienating Activity, Professional Immaturity, and Self-Protecting Ministry. There were six ministerial functions shared by the families as well. They included Building Congregational Community, Relating Faith to the Modern World, Competent Preaching and Worship Leading, Involvement in Caring, Co-ministry to the Alienated, and Responsible Staff Management.[6] The authors reported that there were an additional fifteen characteristics that, with few exceptions, were viewed similarly by the denominational families.

Strommen, reflecting on this groundbreaking project, suggested that the data supported four distinct models of ministry and observed that "[D]enominational differences account for more variance in how people view ministry than all other variables considered in our analyses."[7] The four models included a spiritual, sacramental-liturgical, or social action emphasis while the final model was a blend of the first and third.

The Spiritual Emphasis was most notable among the Evangelical A and B families and Southern Baptists. Grouped in the Evangelical A family because of the similarity of their responses were, for example, the Conservative Baptist Association of America, the Baptist Missionary Association of America, and the Baptist General Conference. Illustrative of the Evangelical B family were the Church of God (Anderson), The Churches of God General Conference, and the Evangelical Covenant Church of America. The Spiritual Emphasis among these three families included clusters that focused on Theocentric-Biblical Ministry, Assertive Individual Evangelism, Precedence of Evangelistic Goals, Theologically Oriented Counseling, and Commitment Reflecting Religious Piety. By contrast, the Sacramental-Liturgical Emphasis and Denominational Collegiality included Roman Catholics, the Orthodox, and the Anglican-Episcopal families.

The Social Action Emphasis, less cohesive than the first two models, was mirrored in the Christian Churches (Disciples), the United Church of Canada, and the United Church of Christ, while the final emphasis, called "Combined Emphases," included the Lutheran Churches, the Presbyterian-Reformed family, and the United Methodists. In effect, each of these families combined an interest in the active proclamation of the Gospel, for example, as well as an interest in social issues.

The fifteenth anniversary study

Daniel Aleshire, reporting on the 1987–88 study, wrote, "The most consistent finding about the ratings of importance was that little change was evident between the 1974 and the 1987 ratings."[8] His overall view was succinctly stated:

> North American denominations have considerable agreement about personal characteristics that are judged negatively, some agreement about personal characteristics that are judged to be important for ministry, and minimal agreement about the importance of different approaches to ministry.[9]

His statement reflects the three central areas that provide the framework of the individual and group profiles for Stages I and II. For example, the negatively judged characteristics included Self Serving Behavior, the Pursuit of Personal Advantage, and Self Protecting Behavior, while the positive characteristics included such traits and behaviors as Fidelity to Tasks and Persons, the Acknowledgment of Limitations, and a Commitment Reflecting Religious Piety. The minimal agreement about the importance of different approaches to ministry focused on the broad areas of Ecclesial Ministry, Conversionist Ministry, Social Justice Ministry, and Community and Congregational Ministry and the characteristics measured within each of these sections.

The thirtieth anniversary study

It is natural enough to become intrigued by the differences evident in the responses of individuals to the items and clusters of the three studies. To set the overall tone, however, it is useful first to portray and then reflect on the mean scores by characteristic measured over the thirty years. Table 2 presents those data.

The top five characteristics—and six where the Means were identical—(indicated in bold) are nearly all lodged in the Personality Characteristics section of the PoM profile. On the seven-point scale of the three instruments, each of these scores was rated between "Quite important" and "Highly important" by both clergy and lay respondents across denominational families. Note that characteristics within the Responsible and Caring section accounted for either three or four of the top five scores in each study. Only one characteristic in the Perceptions of Ministry section surfaced as one of the top five. In 1973–74 it was Building Congregational Community (BLDG) while in the subsequent two studies it was Theocentric-Biblical Ministry (TBIB).

Table 2
Mean Scores by Characteristic

(See Appendix for identification of abbreviations)

		1973–74	1987–88	2003–05
Responsible and Caring				
43	FIDL	**6.29**	6.30	**6.31**
42	RESP	**6.43**	**6.49**	**6.28**
36	LIMT	**6.35**	**6.44**	**6.47**
45	FLEX	6.11	6.14	6.11
25	ICAR	5.73	5.81	5.82
21	PRCO	**6.26**	**6.35**	6.28
Family Perspective				
48	FAML	5.83	5.98	6.08
Personal Faith				
37	PIET	6.20	**6.42**	**6.54**
82	SPRT		**6.46**	**6.47**
Potential Negative				
54	SELF	2.98	2.84	1.90
63	PADV	3.41	3.18	2.19
52	PRTC	3.11	2.90	1.92
60	DMNA	3.68	3.62	3.71
Ecclesial Ministry				
9	LITG	4.87	5.00	5.11
1	RELT	6.20	6.10	6.14
2	TBIB	6.24	**6.35**	**6.43**
5	PRCH	5.87	5.89	5.92
28	CLAR	6.18	6.19	6.23
49	DNOM	5.76	5.89	6.03
Conversionist Ministry				
17	EVAN	5.03	5.08	5.14
19	GOAL	4.03	3.99	4.06
20	CONG	3.58	3.67	3.73
27	LAW	4.00	3.85	3.90
24	THCO	6.17	6.25	6.22
Social Justice Ministry				
18	PLIT	4.34	4.32	4.28
50	CAUS	5.74	5.63	5.65
8	OPEN	5.57	5.61	5.68
16	OPRS	5.12	5.22	5.23
33	IDEA	4.75	4.83	4.77
84	JUST		5.58	5.54
81	WOMN		5.86	5.85
Community/Congregation				
11	SERV	5.92	5.98	6.02
3	YUTH	6.04	5.92	5.96
12	MISN	5.95	6.08	6.06
55	BLDG	**6.34**	6.32	6.13
56	CNFL	6.11	6.12	6.02
57	LDRS	6.07	6.13	6.02
14	UNDR	5.39	5.53	5.48

In the original study, Personal Responsibility (RESP) ranked highest as it did in the 1987–88 study. Items that formed this scale included "Keeps own word—fulfills promises" and "Maintains personal integrity despite pressures to compromise." Nearly equal in importance over the years was the Acknowledgment of Limitations (LIMT). Contributing to this score are statements such as "Acknowledges own need for continued growth in faith" and "Says willingly, 'I don't know,' regarding subjects beyond own knowledge or competence."

There appears to be a slight shift to a new emphasis reflected first in the revision of the survey instrument in 1987–88 and the addition of a cluster of statements designed to measure a new construct called Christian Spirituality (SPRT). This was one of three areas in which items were added to the survey to reflect a perceived shift in emphasis among the seminaries of the Association and the churches to which their graduates are called. In 1987–88 this characteristic ranked second and tied for second place with the Acknowledgment of Limitations in the thirty-year study. Note the thrust of the items that comprise this measure: "Own life gives witness to a personal relationship with God," "Own life reflects a spirituality that encompasses both contemplation and action," and "In teaching and preaching, stresses the importance of growth in prayer."

But, is there not a clear shift in emphasis in the 2003–05 study? Commitment Reflecting Religious Piety (PIET) was ranked first while tied for second were Christian Spirituality (SPRT) and Acknowledgment of Limitations (LIMT). In third place was Theocentric-Biblical Ministry (TBIB). The top choice includes such statements as "Shows the mission of Christ to be first in own life" and "Holds that in the midst of serious problems, God is at work." The two tied for second place have been described in an earlier paragraph while the third, Theocentric-Biblical Ministry, indicates an individual who "leads worship so it is seen as focusing on God," and "Guides people by relating the Scriptures to their human condition."

One can reasonably make the case that, in the thirtieth anniversary study, the focus of the respondents to the survey emphasizes the importance of a new reality. It is now "Highly important" for the minister both to have a personal sense of the primacy of the mission of Christ and a willingness to proclaim that very importance to those whom he or she serves.

Focus on similarities and differences by denomination

Summary statements on the general pattern of similarities and differences by denominational family for the 1973–74 and the 1987–88 studies were presented in the prior section of this article. This section will examine first the overall pattern of similarities across denominational families and then the statistically significant differences (<.01 and <.001) by church family.

Personal characteristics

The format for the tables that follow reflects the categories printed for an individual or school profile. Table 3 presents page one of the profile, Personal Characteristics, and Table 4, the second page, Perceptions of Ministry. To help

visualize the differences in importance, mean scores significant at the .01 level are either higher (+) or lower (-) than the mean for the total study sample. Differences at the .001 level that are higher are indicated by "++" while those that are lower are indicated by "--."[10]

Responsible and caring. It is striking that there are no significant differences among denominational families on half of the characteristics measured in this section. These include Acknowledgment of Limitations (LIMT), Flexibility of Spirit (FLEX), and Involvement in Caring (ICAR). There is only one significant difference among the various denominational families on Fidelity to Tasks and Persons (FIDL) and Perceptive Counseling (PRCO). The only area in which there are clear differences among roughly half of the families is in the area of Personal Responsibility (RESP). Five families view this characteristic as significantly more important than the general population of respondents while three consider it less important. The differences are considerable, some as much as a half point higher or lower (e.g., 5.97 vs. 6.54). To a significant degree, then, respondents in the Anglican-Episcopal, Evangelical B, Free Church, Presbyterian Reformed, and United Methodist traditions judge it very important for a minister or priest to maintain "personal integrity despite pressures to compromise" as well as to keep one's word and fulfill promises.

Family perspective. The differences that appear in the Family Perspective section reflect the view of many Protestant traditions about the importance of the family and the historical celibate nature of Roman Catholic priesthood. The items from the questionnaire do not consider an unmarried clergy.

Personal faith. The items that measure the importance of a beginning minister's Commitment Reflecting Religious Piety (PIET) were part of the original study and the continuing importance of this characteristic is reflected in the current project as well. The measure, Christian Spirituality (SPRT), was added in 1987–88 and continued in the thirtieth anniversary study. Yoked together these two measures reflect the importance given these characteristics by Baptists, the Evangelical A and B churches, and the Free Church family. In sum, they reinforce statements that affirm the critical presence of God in a person's life as well as the burden for those in ministry to reflect that power in their personal lives.

Potential negative. The view of the denominational traditions vis-à-vis the Potential Negative characteristics is remarkably similar. The low mean scores across denominations indicate the level of their concern. Participants completing the questionnaire judged the presence of Self-Serving Behavior (SELF), the Pursuit of Personal Advantage (PADV), and Self-Protecting Behavior (PRTC) from "Quite detrimental" to "Highly detrimental" and their potential presence in a beginning minister as either a major hindrance or one that might disqualify the individual. An Intuitive Domination of Decision Making (DMNA) was seen as "Somewhat detrimental."

Whatever differences appear in this section, then, indicate only slightly less concern than the study sample in general for the potential conflicts that can spring from a self-centered ministry, from a minister who is uncertain of his or her gifts, or from one who would use the ministry to direct and control people.

Table 3[11]
Personal Characteristics by Denominational Family

	A-C Bapt	Angl-Epis	Christians	Evang A	Evang B	Free Chrch	Lutherans	Presb Ref	Roman Catholic	Southern Baptist	United Meth	UC Canada	UCChrist
Responsible and Caring													
FIDL	6.45++												
RESP		6.39+	5.97--		6.54++	6.40+		6.39++		6.04--	6.41++		6.05--
LIMT													
FLEX													
ICAR													
PRCO				6.16-									
Family Perspective													
FAML	6.38++			6.47++	6.47++	6.42++	6.28++	6.36++	4.00--	6.43++	6.25++		
Personal Faith													
PIET	6.65++	6.39--		6.62++	6.70++	6.67++				6.70++		6.19--	6.30--
SPRT	6.64++	6.31-			6.62++		6.19--			6.60++		6.22--	
Potential Negative													
SELF		1.76-						1.78-					
PADV													
PRTC													
DMNA			3.55-	3.60-									

Table 4
Perceptions of Ministry by Denominational Family

	A-C Baptist	Anglican-Episcopalian	Christians	Evan A	Evan B	Free Church	Lutherans	Presbyterian Reformed	Roman Catholic	Southern Baptist	United Methodist	UCCanada	UCChrist
Ecclesial Ministry													
LITG		5.49++	4.86-	4.50--		4.59--	5.27+		5.76++	4.78--	5.26++		
RELT	6.28++			6.04--		5.99-	6.23+			6.04-			
TBIB	6.55+	6.19--		6.53+	6.62++				6.32--	6.61++		6.11--	6.24--
PRCH	6.12++		5.64--	5.63--			6.02+			5.76-	6.01+	6.15++	
CLAR								6.30+					
DNOM		6.27++	5.54--		6.26++	6.22++		6.19++	6.26++	5.51--	6.26++		5.70-
Conversionist Ministry													
EVAN	5.46++	4.39--		5.53++	5.75++	5.41++	4.82--	4.93--	4.67--	6.10++		4.28--	4.48--
GOAL	4.35++	3.55--		4.49++	4.61++		3.86-	3.85--	3.61--	4.92++	3.89--	3.50--	3.50--
CONG									3.55--	3.94++			
LAW	4.27++	3.58--			4.34++		3.67--		3.66--	4.38++		3.53--	3.63-
THCO	6.33++	6.03--		6.36++	6.36+	6.35+	6.07--			6.39++		6.01--	6.03--
Social Justice Ministry													
PLIT	4.52+			3.94--					4.47++	4.12-	4.46++		
CAUS	5.93++								5.41--	5.79+			
OPEN				5.40--						5.46--	5.86++		
OPRS		5.45+		4.79--					5.54++	4.84--	5.41++	5.54+	
IDEA	4.98+	5.15++		4.21--	4.45--	4.56-		4.93+	4.94+	4.19--	5.02++	5.36++	5.13++
JUST	5.79++			5.16--				5.70+	5.85++	5.13--	5.67+		
WOMN	5.10++	6.02+		5.44--				6.00++		5.36--	6.10++	6.08+	6.07++
Community/Congregation													
SERV	6.21++			5.87-							6.12+		
YUTH	6.09+			5.68--		5.81-					6.07++	6.16++	
MISN		5.90-											
BLDG										6.02-			
CNFL		6.14+		5.93-				6.10++					
LDRS		6.17++						6.16++		5.76--	6.10+		
UNDR				5.28--						5.27--	5.60+		5.65+

Summary. This section warrants five summary statements. First, overall there are few significant differences by denominational family among the characteristics measured in the Responsible and Caring area. Second, the significantly higher scores given to Personal Responsibility by the Anglican-Episcopal, Evangelical B, Free Church, Presbyterian Reformed, and United Methodists reflect an important emphasis for these traditions. Third, the differences in Family Commitment are explained simply as the likely differences between celibate and noncelibate clergy. Fourth, the importance of a Commitment Reflecting Religious Piety and Christian Spirituality were highlighted in the Baptist, Evangelical, and Free Church traditions. Fifth, there were few differences to be noted in the view that Potential Negative characteristics could impede or even derail a successful beginning to congregational and parish ministry.

Perceptions of ministry

Table 4 presents the cluster of characteristics in which most of the significant differences by denominational family appeared. It underscores, in general, Aleshire's summary statement from his 1987–88 study, namely, that North American denominations have "minimal agreement about the importance of different approaches to ministry."[12]

The Perceptions of Ministry section arrays four broad areas of ministry; ecclesial, conversionist, social justice, and community and congregational. Adopted from earlier published "categories" of ministry, these four have been used to provide a framework for fruitful discussions in the practice of ministry. While it can be argued that new categories need to be imagined, they have nonetheless remained helpful for the interpretation of students' and schools' profiles in the Profiles of Ministry program.

Ecclesial ministry. At first glance, the scores of the six characteristics grouped in this area resemble a scatter plot. They appear to defy trying to detect any patterns. Some do emerge, however.

First, as might be anticipated, the Anglican-Episcopal, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and United Methodist traditions placed a higher value on elements of a Sacramental-Liturgical Ministry (LITG) than did the Christian, Evangelical A, and Southern Baptist churches. One would reasonably anticipate that the same group would value Denominational Collegiality (DNOM) and, for the most part, they do. Joining them, however, are the Evangelical B churches, members of the Free Church and the Presbyterian Reformed traditions. Each of these, too, values such items as "works cooperatively with superiors" and giving "calm rational explanation when a request contrary to denominational regulations cannot be granted."

Relating Faith to the Modern World (RELT), a Theocentric-Biblical Ministry (TBIB), and Competent Preaching (PRCH) form a second cluster within Ecclesial Ministry, one that relates more to proclamation than to either rite or ritual. Within this group of characteristics only the first and third form a pattern. The American-Canadian Baptists and Lutherans both valued these more highly than, for example, the Evangelical A or the Southern Baptist traditions. The first two families judged it very important to help "people determine religious educational needs in the congregation" and "lay people relate Christian teach-

ings to current issues and human needs" as well as to both hold "the interest and attention of congregation" and conduct religious rites smoothly. If Relating Faith to the Modern World and Competent Preaching included only statements about proclamation, it is safe to assume that the Evangelical A and Southern Baptist traditions would have scored similarly to the other two families. However, neither measure is that narrowly focused. Both include statements about rite and ritual with the likely result of a lower rated importance for these two denominational families.

Clarity of Thought and Communication (CLAR) drew in only the Presbyterian-Reformed tradition whose respondents judged it more important than did any other family.

Conversionist ministry. Overall, Baptists, evangelicals, and members of the Free Church tradition chose to emphasize the importance of aggressively proclaiming the Gospel (EVAN) and being clear about the value of faith "in coping with personal problems." The Anglican-Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian Reformed, Roman Catholic, United Church of Canada, and the United Church of Christ, however, while considering these important were more likely to consider them a "minor asset" rather than as either "Quite important" or "Highly important." The Precedence of Evangelistic Goals (GOAL) and a Law Orientation to Ethical Issues (LAW) divided the two groups in a similar fashion although the level of importance attributed to these two was less than for either of the first two characteristics.

Significant differences in Total Concentration on Congregational Concerns (CONG) drew in only the Roman Catholic and Southern Baptist traditions. However, the level of its importance for both families suggests that neither viewed this with any great importance. This is likely a significant difference with little meaning.

Social justice ministry. Churches have been accused of talking a better line about the importance of social justice issues than actually doing anything about them. Taking into account both level of importance (greater than 5.00) and consistency, only one of these measures struck a cord with a number of church families, namely, Support for Women in the Church (WOMN). American-Canadian Baptists, Anglican-Episcopals, Presbyterian Reformed, United Methodists, the United Church of Canada, and the United Church of Christ underscored the importance of this area and viewed it significantly higher than did any of the other church families. Among items in this characteristic are an active encouragement for "women to take leadership roles in the congregation" and an invitation for "both women and men to speak on significant occasions" in congregational and parish life. Other items in this characteristic broaden the social justice issue to include the poor, the oppressed, and the disabled.

United Methodist respondents regularly chose levels of response to six of the seven areas measured in this section that provide them, as a denominational family, the most consistent pattern of significantly higher scores than all other families in this study. They include Aggressive Political Leadership (PLIT), Openness to Pluralism (OPEN), Active Concern for the Oppressed (OPRS), Interest in New Ideas (IDEA), Concern for Social Justice (JUST), and Support for

Women in the Church (WOMN). The Roman Catholic family shared four of the six areas of concern with United Methodists. By contrast, the Evangelical A tradition and Southern Baptists routinely rated these same areas as significantly less important. The contrast is both sharp and noteworthy.

The other significant differences among the denominational families, whether higher or lower than the overall mean, do not indicate a clear pattern.

Community and congregational ministry. The first professional degree of the member schools of ATS, the MDiv, is designed with an emphasis on preparing seminarians for pastoral ministry in the congregations and parishes of the churches in the United States and Canada. The seven measures in this cluster have been consistently rated as "Quite important" overall for a beginning minister through the thirty years of this research project. At some points in its history, one or the other has had a heightened emphasis. For example, in 1973–74 Building Congregational Community (BLDG) was valued more highly than it was in the thirtieth anniversary study while Sharing Congregational Leadership (LDRS) had a special emphasis in the fifteen-year study. Neither difference detracts from the overall conclusion that each of the seven measures was and remains important for those preparing for pastoral ministry. It should not be surprising then that there were only about half as many significant differences in this section of the Perceptions of Ministry as there were on average in each of the prior sections (53.8 percent).

Nonetheless there were important differences. The most striking pattern was that of the United Methodist family. In this section as in the prior one, United Methodists most clearly accented a preference for a particular style of congregational ministry. They included Pastoral Service to All (SERV), Relating Well to Children and Youth (YUTH), Sharing Congregational Leadership (LDRS), and Promotion of Understanding of Issues (UNDR). Each involves outreach and each is relational. Pastoral Service to All is an outreach to prospective church members, Relating Well to Children and Youth is an effort to engage and support youth in the mission of the congregations, Sharing Congregational Leadership prompts ownership among congregants for the welfare and growth of the church, and Promotion of Understanding of Issues reflects an openness to different ideas and individuals with different perspectives. Also striking, but significantly lower than the mean for all denominations, was the diminished accent on most of these same characteristics for the Evangelical A family. Southern Baptists also reflected lessened concern for the importance of Promotion of Understanding of Issues and included a similar view on Building Congregational Community and Sharing Congregational Leadership.

The American-Canadian Baptist family shared a heightened concern with the United Methodists for Pastoral Service to All and Relating Well to Children and Youth. The Anglican-Episcopal and the Presbyterian Reformed families on the other hand highlighted both Conflict Utilization (CNFL) and Sharing Congregational Leadership. The first of these affirms the reality of differences and disagreements in congregational life but sees them as potentially positive if given both the structure in which to engage the differences and competence in moderating them.

Summary. It is clear that the church families differed most in the area of preferences for pastoral ministry or styles of ministerial service. The differences are intelligible. First, the area of Ecclesial Ministry had a cluster of families—Anglican-Episcopal, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and United Methodist—that placed a high value on liturgical ministry. On the other hand, the active proclamation of the Gospel was a distinctive pattern for others. Second, Conversionist Ministry was clearly the terrain of Baptists, evangelicals, and members of the Free Church tradition. The Scriptures need to be both proclaimed and lived. Third, Support for Women in the Church was highlighted by more than half of the denominational families. The United Methodists, however, endorsed nearly all of the characteristics measured in the Social Justice Ministry section, thus providing a clear accent to the ministry of those engaged in that tradition. Fourth, Community and Congregational Ministry, held "Quite important" by all families, revealed for a second time an emphasis of the United Methodist tradition. Other denominational families endorsed a preference for some of the same areas while others, the Anglican-Episcopal and the Presbyterian Reformed traditions, held up the importance of working with and resolving conflicts.

Conclusion

The seventeen denominational families in this and the two prior studies share much in common. It seems clear, however, that there has been a gradual, intensifying expectation that young ministers and priests both be more personally spiritual and witness their commitment to Christ in the congregations and parishes they serve. To be a person of one's word and to acknowledge limitations lay the groundwork for this transformation. Both were highly valued in each of the studies. Movement to a deeper level of self-awareness was detected in the 1987-88 study and has come into its own in the thirty-year study. Respondents from the Christian churches expect their ministers and priests to have both a personal sense of the primacy of Christ in their lives and to witness that in their ministry. The characteristics that form this judgment begin with the importance given to Personal Responsibility and the Acknowledgment of Limitations in the original study, the addition of Christian Spirituality in 1987–88, and in the 2003–05 study, the transformation was completed with Commitment Reflecting Religious Piety and a Theocentric-Biblical Ministry.

Denominational families in the thirty-year study, as in 1987–88, were also united in the power of the Potential Negative characteristics to harm, reduce, or prevent effective ministry.

Finally, the distinctive histories of the church families have shaped their vision for Christian ministerial service. As in 1980 with the publication of *Ministry in America*, the churches are encouraged to look at their own particular profile, not as part of the whole Christian tradition but in fidelity to their understanding of the call of Christ. A helpful resource for this exploration is the Association's *Profiles of Ministry Advisor's Manual*.[13]

Francis A. Lonsway was a member of the professional staff of ATS at the time of the original project, a consultant for the fifteen-year survey, and director of the ATS Profiles of Ministry program since 1992. He directed the thirty-year study. He retired from ATS in the fall of 2005 and accepted an appointment to the graduate faculty in management and leadership of Webster University in Louisville, Kentucky.

Appendix

Identification of Abbreviations

Responsible and Caring

FIDL	Fidelity to Tasks and Persons
RESP	Personal Responsibility
LIMT	Acknowledgment of Limitations
FLEX	Flexibility of Spirit
ICAR	Involvement in Caring
PRCO	Perceptive Counseling

Family Perspective

FAML	Mutual Family Commitment

Personal Faith

PIET	Commitment Reflecting Religious Piety
SPRT	Christian Spirituality

Potential Negative

SELF	Self-Serving Behavior
PADV	Pursuit of Personal Advantage
PRTC	Self-Protecting Behavior
DMNA	Intuitive Domination of Decision Making

Ecclesial Ministry

LITG	Sacramental-Liturgical Ministry
RELT	Relating Faith to the Modern World
TBIB	Theocentric-Biblical Ministry
PRCH	Competent Preaching
CLAR	Clarity of Thought and Communication
DNOM	Denominational Collegiality

Conversionist Ministry

EVAN	Assertive Individual Evangelism
GOAL	Precedence of Evangelistic Goals
CONG	Total Concentration on Congregational Concerns
LAW	Law Orientation to Ethical Issues
THCO	Theologically Oriented Counseling

Social Justice Ministry

PLIT	Aggressive Political Leadership
CAUS	Support of Unpopular Causes
OPEN	Openness to Pluralism
OPRS	Active Concern for the Oppressed
IDEA	Interest in New Ideas
JUST	Concern for Social Justice
WOMN	Support for Women in the Church

Community/Congregation

SERV	Pastoral Service to All
YUTH	Relating Well to Children and Youth
MISN	Encouragement of World Mission
BLDG	Building Congregational Community
CNFL	Conflict Utilization
LDRS	Sharing Congregational Leadership
UNDR	Promotion of Understanding of Issues

ENDNOTES

1. Francis A. Lonsway, "Profiles of Ministry: History and Current Research," in *Theological Education* 41, no. 2 (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, 2006).

2. David Schuller, Milo Brekke, and Merton Strommen, *Readiness for Ministry Volume II—Assessment* (Vandalia, OH: The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, 1975).

3. Sources include: David Schuller, Milo Brekke, and Merton Strommen, *Readiness for Ministry Volume I—Criteria* (Vandalia, OH: The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, 1975), 113; Schuller, Brekke, and Strommen, *Readiness for Ministry Volumn I—Criteria,* 112–113; Daniel O. Aleshire and David S. Schuller, *Profiles of Ministry Advisor's Manual* (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, 1987), 83–113; and Francis A. Lonsway, *Profiles of Ministry Advisor's Manual* (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, 2005), 59–91.

4. The *Profiles of Ministry Advisor's Manual* lists forty-three measured characteristics not thirty-eight. Three in the manual are double measured. Mutual Family Commitment and Ministry Precedence over Family are different components of the same characteristic as are Competent Preaching and Competent Worship Leading, and Encouragement of World Mission and Balanced Approach to World Mission. One characteristic, Belief in a Provident God (PROV) is measured by responses to the *Casebook* and not the *Profiles of Ministry Survey* while Position on Conservative Moral Issues (MORL) is drawn solely from interview questions.

5. David Schuller, Milo Brekke, and Merton Strommen, Ministry in America (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 81.

6. Ibid., 83. Four of six of the personal characteristics are part of the subsequent research projects, namely, Fidelity to Tasks and Persons, Flexibility of Spirit, Self-Serving Behavior, and Self-Protecting Behavior. Four of six ministerial functions likewise are part of the 1987–88 and 2003–05 research projects, Relating Faith to the Modern World, Competent Preaching and Worship Leading, Involvement in Caring, and Building Congregational Community.

7. Ibid., 55.

8. Daniel O. Aleshire, "The Profiles of Ministry Program," in *Clergy Assessment and Career Development*, eds., Richard A. Hunt, John E. Hinkle, Jr., and H. Newton Malony (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 101.

9. Ibid.

10. It is appropriate to use <.001 when exploring the possible differences between large groups within this study, for example, the differences between the responses of clergy and laity. However, when estimating the likelihood of error between a denominational family, e.g., between the Anglican-Episcopal sample (N= 121) or the Evangelical A family (N= 217), it is reasonable to use <.01 or one in a hundred chances that the significant finding was an error. Researchers would also feel justified at using the <.05 level for these subgroups. Both <.01 and <.001 have been used to increase the probability that there would be little doubt that the significant difference detected is in fact real and not an error.

11. Two families have been omitted from this and subsequent tables, the newly created "Baptists" and the "Unaffiliated/Nondenominational." The "Baptists" included newly formed groups such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. No significant dif-

ferences were detected between the responses of these groups and those of the sample population.

12. Aleshire, "The Profiles of Ministry Program."

13. Francis A. Lonsway, Profiles of Ministry Advisor's Manual (Pittsburgh: The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, 2005).

Theological Education Submission Guidelines

Association of Theological Schools is a membership organization of schools in the United States and Canada that conducts post-baccalaureate professional and academic degree programs to educate persons for the practice of ministry and advanced study of the theological disciplines. The Association's mission is to promote the improvement and enhancement of theological schools to the benefit of communities of faith and the broader public. The Commission on Accrediting of ATS accredits schools that are members of ATS and approves the degree programs they offer.

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Unsolicited submissions are reviewed by members of the journal's Editorial Board, who then make recommendations regarding their publication. The Editorial Board will not consider articles that are being submitted simultaneously to other publications.

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1. Recommended length of articles is 5,000 words (approximately 18 double-spaced pages).
2. Follow *Chicago Manual of Style,* 15th edition, using endnotes.
3. Convert footnotes to ENDNOTES, if necessary, using author's given name and then the surname with no intervening comma.
4. The *American Heritage Dictionary* and the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* are the references for preferred spellings.
5. Provide a paragraph ABSTRACT at the beginning of the article in approximately 80 words.
6. Add a short (2–3 sentence) paragraph at the end of the article identifying the author(s), institution or relationship to the project/topic, position held, and/or other information relevant to the experience of the writer(s).
7. Articles should be emailed to the managing editor (merrill@ats.edu) in Microsoft Word, followed by a hard copy sent by conventional mail to: Nancy Merrill, Managing Editor, *Theological Education,* The Association of Theological Schools, 10 Summit Park Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1103.