

# Research on human formation published as part of *Organizational and Educational Models* initiative

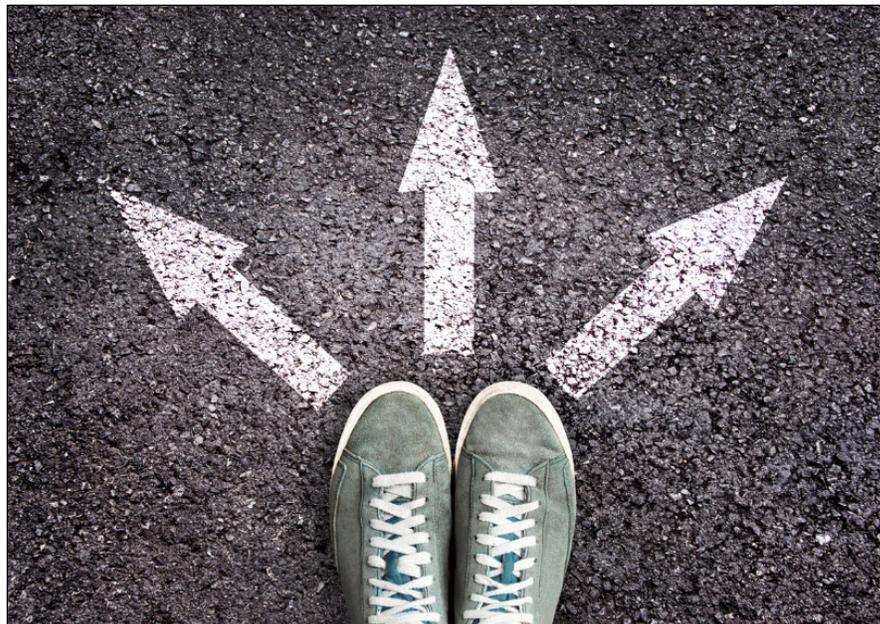
BY STEPHEN R. GRAHAM

Four different study and resource groups have addressed key educational issues as part of the Association's Organizational and Educational Models in Theological Education initiative, one of which focused on human formation.

A group of ATS faculty and administrators from Protestant schools bringing a range of understandings of and practices toward human formation met between 2021 and 2023. They engaged in research, explored different approaches, identified key questions and issues, and provided the groundwork for ongoing conversations about human formation of students.

What they learned about similar approaches and across differences is illuminating and is being shared in this digital resource with the broader ATS membership. Through a process of exploration and learning together that included gathering additional input from participants at the 2022 ATS/COA Biennial Meeting, the group produced reports on a range of assigned topics:

- Assessment of Human Formation: A Summary of Findings
- Human Formation: Dimensions and Definitions
- ATS Human Formation Study Group: Psychological Testing Report
- Pedagogical and Institutional Practices



- Intercultural Competency for Human Formation, and
- Training Faculty and Staff for Human Formation in Theological Schools

Through their histories of service and according to their particular theological traditions, theological schools have understood the physical, psychological, spiritual, and relational formation of students as an important facet of theological education. Greater emphasis across ATS member schools has come to be placed on “human” formation as ways of social and ecclesial support that contributed to this area of formation have diminished over time.

In his 2021 book, *Beyond Profession: The Next Future of Theological Education*, former ATS Executive Director Daniel O. Aleshire proposed that the current “professional” model of theological education is being replaced by a model that emphasizes student formation, including “human” formation. The work of this research and study

group contributes to that trend and is intended to facilitate the developing and ongoing conversation.

Research reports on multiple modalities and prior learning assessment were published in the [holiday 2023](#) and [September 2024](#) issues of *Colloquy Online*. While not intended to be comprehensive, nor the final word on the topics, these reports identify current effective practices and name helpful resources to promote ongoing conversation in these areas.

The OEM initiative is focusing on work in the following four areas: (1) Organizational Models, (2) Adaptive Educational Work, (3) Faculty Development, and (4) Formation of Students. In addition to the study and resource groups, the OEM initiative has identified strategies to complete the work and build on findings from the *Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education* project, including offering the *Moving Forward in Mission* grants.



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Click the booklet to read the reports!