



CONVERSATIONS

The 2007 Cohort Prepares for Seminar

By Gretchen E. Ziegenhals

The 2007 cohort of theological schools in The Lexington Seminar: Theological Teaching for the Church's Ministries met March 2 in the early spring sunshine of historic Alexandria, Virginia, to discuss the narratives they have prepared for the Summer Seminar. Representatives from Duke University Divinity School, Emmanuel College at the University of Toronto, Princeton Theological Seminary, Union Theological Seminary, and Yale Divinity School met with Seminar staff and consultants to discuss issues of teaching and learning, including student formation, faculty formation, curriculum revision, institutional identity, and the relationship between the theological school and the church.

Duke University Divinity School

Duke is a university based theological school that is at the same time a seminary of the United Methodist Church. These two constituencies encourage a variety of commitments to both the in-



Euan K. Cameron (Union Theological Seminary), Lacey Warner (Duke Divinity School), Darrell L. Guder (Princeton Theological Seminary), and Kristen J. Leslie (Yale Divinity School) met in Alexandria, Virginia, to discuss the narratives they have prepared for the Summer Seminar.

tellectual and the spiritual life, that give Duke its particular character. The school's location also influences its identity and mission. Situated in Durham, North Carolina, the school places most field education students in rural churches. With a student



Phyllis D. Airhart (Emmanuel College), had to "attend" the Alexandria meeting by phone due to weather conditions in Toronto.

body of 530, and 42 full-time faculty, the school offers five degrees, the newest of which is the Th.D. Eighty percent of the student body is enrolled in the MDiv. program, and the average age at Duke for this group of students is 24. The Divinity School enjoys one of the youngest student bodies among ATS schools, which presents both benefits and challenges. Duke's narrative asks questions about how to better prepare pastors and

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Lacey Warner (Duke Divinity School) and Diamond Cephus, Jr., (Seminar consultant)

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teachers, such as, “How might faculty, preceptors, and students participate in teaching and learning as individuals in community to form scholarly pastors and pastoral scholars for the academy and church in the world?”

Emmanuel College, University of Toronto

Emmanuel is also a school with multiple constituencies. Located in culturally diverse Toronto, it “celebrates the wider opportunities” of its relationship with the University of Toronto, and is a founding member of the Toronto School of Theology. Working with both the constituency of the academy and The United Church of Canada has shaped faculty at Emmanuel as teachers and given them a sense of mission. The student body is larger and younger than in past years (this year’s entering class was 50 students), and most have not grown up in a religious tradition. The faculty almost completely turned over in the past 20 years, and now teach many new programs. There are more female faculty, more lay faculty, and there is more denominational diversity than ever before. A new curriculum has

been approved for the 2008-9 academic year that brings with it many changes for the school. The narrative voices the questions and uncertainties implicit in such change. Emmanuel hopes to use its time in Maine in part to think through issues surrounding a new institutional identity. How can faculty best navigate times of transition and change?

Princeton Theological Seminary

Princeton is the largest seminary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with 750 students and approximately 50 faculty. Half of the M.Div. students are Presbyterian, and the other half represents a diverse group of other, mostly Protestant, denominations. The second largest group is non-denominational. The



Peter T. Cha (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School)

ethos of the seminary is created in part by a full-time, residential, young student body, and by the fact that one half of the faculty live on campus. Chapel, five days a week, is the heart of campus life. For the first time in history, women students outnumbered men this fall. A large international group of MTS and Th.M. students and a network of alumni teaching around the world help to orient the school towards the global church. In addition, many students now at Princeton have not

Summer Seminar 2009 Participants

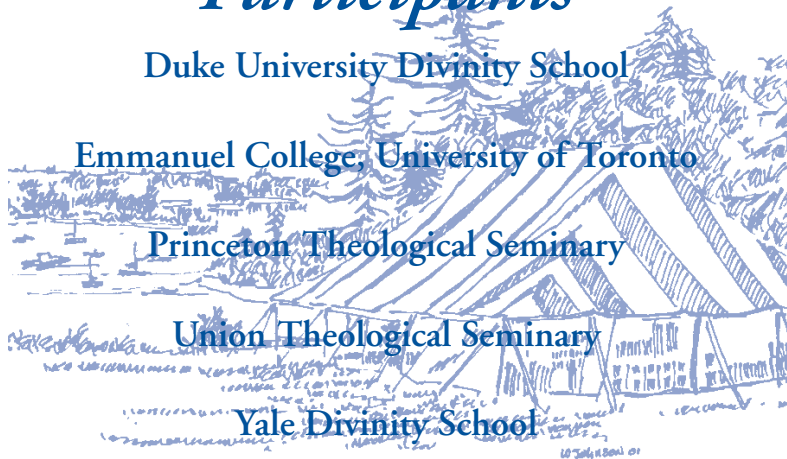
Duke University Divinity School

Emmanuel College, University of Toronto

Princeton Theological Seminary

Union Theological Seminary

Yale Divinity School



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been shaped in congregations, but rather in parachurch organizations, so they come with a very individualized notion of what faith is. Princeton’s narrative looks at the first-year “portal” experience, which provides “one window into deeper issues and assumptions about the mission of the seminary and its M.Div. program.” How do students from so many backgrounds become a learning community preparing to lead the church?

Union Theological Seminary

Union is an “independent graduate school of theology whose mission is to educate men and women for ministries of the Christian faith, service in contemporary society, and study of the great issues of our time.” The school has cooperative graduate programs with Columbia and stands within an institutional tradition which has been shaped by critical liberalism and theologies of liberation. In the past decade, the faculty has struggled with absences created by financial exigencies that forced reduction in the size of the faculty itself. The school, however, is now entering an era of renewed strength resulting from a successful financial campaign, creative use of surplus space, new cooperative arrangements with Columbia, and a curriculum reform that reaffirms the value of Union’s urban location. The student body, for example, has grown by 15-20 percent each year

“How do we educate students for ministry and engage many kinds of diversity, while remaining committed to academic excellence?”



The Asticou Inn in Northeast Harbor, Maine is the setting for the Seminar’s conversations about theological teaching and learning.

for several years. (The seminary now has 312 students and 16 full-time faculty.) Union’s students and faculty share commitments to academic study engaged with issues of social justice, and the campus community expresses this spirit. Union’s narrative asks how the faculty can equip students to go out of this distinctive institutional experience into the realities of church and society, which are often a more “brutal world.”

Yale Divinity School

Yale Divinity school describes itself as “an ecumenical, nonsectarian setting within the broader Yale University community” that prepares leaders for service in the church and in the world. It also includes the diverse constituencies of the Berkeley School of Theology (an Episcopal seminary) and the Institute of Sacred Music. The median age of its 388 students is 25. The largest denomination represented among its student body is Episcopal, followed by Roman Catholic. As it strives to bring together faith and intellect, the school offers three degrees: the

M.Div., the M.A.R., and the S.T.M. The newly redesigned chapel underscores the sense of community at YDS, with daily services well attended by both students and faculty. YDS prides itself on worship that is formative, intimate and creative, with modern and global sensibilities. Most students live in the New Haven area, as most of the old living quadrangle is now office space. YDS continues to recruit faculty, to expand its commitment to racial diversity, to engage issues of globalization, and to finish rehabbing its physical plant. The narrative explores the kinds of diversity that are now facing students and faculty. “How do we educate students for ministry and engage many kinds of diversity, while remaining committed to academic excellence?”

The narratives will form the basis of the daily conversations at the Summer Seminar, June 14-19 in Northeast Harbor, Maine. Each school will send a six-member team to participate in the Seminar discussions, to enjoy daily worship in the ocean-side tent, and to experience the time and the setting for conversations about theological teaching and learning for the church’s ministries, with colleagues and friends.



2006 Divinity Schools Outline Projects

By Gretchen E. Ziegenhals

The four divinity schools from the 2006 cohort of The Lexington Seminar: Theological Teaching for the Church's Ministries have designated the Lexington grant-related projects and activities that they will engage over the next two years. Each school is addressing issues of teaching and learning within contexts where academic inquiry in the university setting is balanced with theological learning, ministerial studies, and spiritual growth. The following are synopses of each grant proposal:

Candler School of Theology at Emory University

Candler will focus on issues of identity and ethos, as they seek "support toward nurturing and affirming a Candler communal ethos around teaching." Candler is committed both to classroom teaching and primary scholarship, and is also a seminary of the United Methodist Church. Through their project, Candler will "create opportunities for faculty members to reflect together and individually on the animating roots of their vocations as theological educators and to identify and affirm shared theological and pedagogical values and commitments."

A significant intent of the project is to assist the faculty in clearly articulating and celebrating their distinctive Candler faculty ethos. In this



Participants in the Summer Seminar meet formally and informally on the deck of the Asticou Inn overlooking Northeast Harbor. (Photo by Carolyn Call)

process, they hope also to "discern and promote pedagogical practices" that embody the ethos they celebrate, and to strengthen their identity as theological educators.

The project activities include: "1) a series of focus group discussions among faculty and senior administrators; 2) bringing to campus an outside speaker/consultant on theological education and the teaching vocation; 3) individual interviews with each faculty member about their vocational callings and commitments in theological education; and 4) the creation, production, and adoption of a summary report on Candler faculty's shared vocation as teachers."

Candler plans to use the report produced out of this project to create a brochure highlighting "teaching at Candler." They write that their ultimate continuing goal is to "establish a pattern of ongoing conversation about pedagogical strategies and practices that will enable the school to more fully realize the theological and educational mission we seek to embody in our ethos."

Harvard Divinity School

One of Harvard's goals, after the faculty approved a major revision of the M.Div. curriculum in 2004-2005, was to "create a program to which every member of the faculty could make a substantial contribution." After two years of the revised curriculum, this goal had been met successfully, with one exception: while

field education is a central aspect of the M.Div. program, faculty are rarely closely engaged with field education programs or field supervisors. Nor are they involved in "sustained conversations with students and their field supervisors about how and what students learn in the field and how that learning is related to the learning they pursue in classrooms at HDS."

Harvard's grant proposal seeks to "bring HDS faculty into closer proximity to the field education that is so central to our students' education as 'learned ministers' by enabling faculty to relate their disciplines to concrete

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ministry experiences as presented by field education students.” Field supervisors, students, and faculty will engage in a series of written and verbal exchanges that will “enhance the current curriculum by deepening the reflective conversations about how academic work and concrete ministerial experiences enable reciprocal learning.”

The proposal has three components: the first includes three convenings of students, supervisors, and faculty to discuss critical incidents or cases from field education experiences. The second focuses on engaging faculty academic disciplines with the practice of ministry at a full-day retreat in Cambridge, and the publication of a booklet in which six faculty share their reflections on the convenings. The third component of the project is to fund several faculty visits to field education sites.

Harvard believes that this project will enable them to “weave additional and deeply reflective conversations into the existing curriculum,” and to



Randall Zachman of Notre Dame and wife Carolyn Call on Cadillac Mountain.



Ashley Bryan, Maine artist and writer, invites Seminar participants to his home on Little Cranberry Island. Photo by Nancy Swearer.

“engage faculty in the actual problems and dilemmas students are encountering in their field education experiences.”

University of Notre Dame’s Department of Theology

Notre Dame’s participation in the Seminar helped them understand that in order to implement successfully their recently developed M.Div. learning goals, they would need to address concurrently their institutional culture where “the values of the academy in scholarship and in course work sometimes seem to overshadow the educational values for ministerial leadership.”

Ministerial education and formation in a Roman Catholic context

involves educating the whole person. Yet some faculty are not familiar with such educational goals, and want to remain independent researchers who teach a particular subject in their expertise without much attention to the overall curricular needs and values of the ministerial students. Notre Dame hopes to use the Lexington project as a springboard for gradually changing this culture into one that integrates “the intellect, the human, the pastoral, and the spiritual.”

Before they begin to reconstruct their learning goals, they plan to convene dinners where cross-sections of faculty can converse about what they

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teach and their callings as theological teachers in order to “encourage faculty to speak of their ideals, to recover that language,” and to “build ownership of the ideals implicit in the goals.” Next, each participant will submit a narrative that articulates their dinner conversation and subsequent reflections. The narratives will then be collected and used to generate broader discussion during two faculty retreats.

They note, “Our project will be partially successful if we are able to capture in written form many diverse ideals that faculty articulated in their narratives. The project would be very successful if we can engage the entire faculty in a sustained conversation (two hours) about the values and ideals that arose from their dinner conversations over the work and calling of theological teaching.”

Vanderbilt University Divinity School

One of the primary discoveries that Vanderbilt’s team experienced at the Seminar was that Vanderbilt’s “high premium on diversity” meant that there was no one approach to spirituality or to interiority that could be commended to all students by all faculty. At the same time, the faculty is con-

vinced that its “highly intellectual and socially activist school” must not ignore the importance of spirituality. Thus they have named their project “Spiritualities at Vanderbilt Divinity School.”

The project is a “multi-part effort to provide testimonies to a variety of attentions to the interior life of students and faculty that can fund a kind of literacy about matters spiritual.” While faculty are aware of the difficulty in speaking about spirituality in a diverse environment, they affirm that “it is the duty of those who are moved by religious commitment and spiritually informed conviction to be articulate about the bedrock and the hopeful horizons for their religious outlooks.”

After soliciting responses from student leaders and faculty members at a Dean’s Lunch during the fall semester, the team has articulated two goals for the project: first, “to experiment with a variety of ways that the faculty might partner with students

to approach the inner life of religious people” and second, “to experiment with several modalities of that approach in order to discover what ‘works’ in bridging academics and spiritualities such that Vanderbilt’s faculty and students may be more faithful to the totality of the fullness about religious life and practice.”

The project will include five activities: 1) A series of six workshops in Ignatian spirituality for Catholics and Protestants, interspersed with meetings of students and faculty to read and discuss primary and secondary literature. 2) Student groups’ spiritual retreats, hosted by the Black Seminarians and the Office of Women’s concerns and Eco-Action. 3) A desert spirituality experience for faculty at the borderlands region of Arizona and Sonora, Mexico, in order to experience the same “dissonance, hope, and hopelessness” that their students have experienced in similar programs. 4) A forum entitled “What Matters to Me and Why,” where faculty will present to students what makes them tick religiously, morally, and personally, in ways that would not ordinarily be shared in the classroom. 5) The addition of more “why we are here” elements to the M.Div. and MTS orientations.



Participants discuss issues raised by the narratives during the Seminar sessions.



Seminary Newsbriefs:

2005 Seminaries

Bethany Theological Seminary

President Eugene F. Roop, who retires in July 2007, writes, "In the context of the Lexington Seminar, the faculty began to explore the value and impact of the heritage of the Church of the Brethren on Bethany's mission in the twenty-first century. This conversation has now expanded to include the trustees



as well as the entire faculty and staff. For their part, the faculty continued and extended this discussion at

its August 2007 retreat and in extra faculty meetings during the fall. Several decisions have been and will be informed by this important discussion, including: (1) the adoption of a new student body profile to guide the work of student recruitment; (2) a major revision of the financial aid program, focusing on how to deploy those resources; (3) the search for a new president; and (4) the search for two new faculty members to replace senior faculty, including a professor of Brethren history, faith and practice. In each of these items on our agenda we have intentionally asked the question: How do we appropriately and responsibly embody our identity as a denominational seminary and creatively employ the heritage of the Church of the Brethren?"

Eastern Mennonite Seminary

Academic Dean Ervin Stutzman writes, "The faculty and staff at EMS met in retreat in January 2006 to

discuss the concept of the 'other.' Each of our faculty members shared perspectives on one or more of the following questions: 1) How does my experience of myself as 'other' within the faculty affect my roles and relationships within the faculty? 2) How does my particular academic discipline influence the way that I respond to 'otherness?' and 3) How have experiences of the 'other' in my life shaped who I am and how I teach? Last summer, members of the faculty designed a specific project to help them engage with someone who has a very different perspective on life. In addition, we have had several conversations about the nature of our pedagogy. We gathered in another faculty retreat in early January to share our experiences of the 'other' and to discuss the implications for our teaching practices."



Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest

Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Church History Alan Gregory writes, "In December, the faculty concluded a nine-month series of consultations, aided by two very deft and encouraging facilitators. Our purpose was to improve the quality of our common life; some would say to *achieve* a common life such that we might improve it. We have managed to discuss with gratifying frankness and without rancor or



snarkiness some very sensitive and difficult issues such as theological diversity, authority, professional anxieties and aspirations, relationships with the Board, past conflicts and disappointments, and expectations of the new Dean.

To get us started, we were asked to plot on a timeline that stretched the length of a wall, the main events in the faculty's history, plotting them against important moments in recent church and cultural history. This device cleared fog banks of ignorance and misunderstanding and launched, according to one of our longest standing faculty members, the best conversations in twenty-odd years. We are now committed to restoring the practice of faculty retreats and to regular post-Lexington meetings, some facilitated, some flying without that parachute. Finally, we have a Dean elect, the Rev. Dr. Douglas Travis who comes from Houston; thus, like the hero of a 1950's B movie, we have roamed the country only to marry the girl next door!"

Trinity Lutheran Seminary

Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Christian Education Diane Hymans writes, "During this 2006-2007 academic year, the office of the academic dean is focused on all of the administrative details that need to be completed for next year's shift from our calendar based on quarters to a semester calendar. Meanwhile, faculty members are pondering how to reshape courses and syllabi to accommodate this major change in our community life. In the midst of all of this, we are anticipating two events related to our Lexington Seminar project,



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THE LEXINGTON SEMINAR

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one next spring and one the following summer. In April, Dr. James Wind from the Alban Institute will spend a day with the faculty helping us explore how our work and our priorities are being reshaped by global changes in pedagogies, curriculum, student body, learning technologies, global realities, and parish life. Our conversation will focus on the book *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination*. The book reports on findings from the Carnegie Foundation’s research on preparing persons for pastoral ministry. Dr. Lisa Dahill, who joined Trinity’s faculty last year, is one of the authors of the book. And in August 2007, the faculty will experience an overnight retreat, the first for us in many years, with Dorothy Bass, who will help us think about questions of vocation and Sabbath.”

Wartburg Theological Seminary

Academic Dean and Professor of Contextual Theology Craig Nessian writes, “The faculty project, as envisioned by the Wartburg team who gathered for the first consultation, is to undertake a revision of the Faculty



Handbook. The grant will facilitate this common work to be done during an extended faculty retreat. The retreat will take place May 20-25, 2007 at the Pallottine Retreat Center in St. Louis,

Missouri. This setting will also allow the faculty to enjoy the sites and cultural opportunities available in St. Louis in the month of May. Preparatory work for the retreat began when the faculty gathered in February for the spring semester.”



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