**Professionals, Pastors, and Pedagogues:**

**The Origins of An Understanding of Theological Education**

**1880-1957**

**By Glenn T. Miller**

This paper summarizes some conclusions of a more in-depth history of seminary faculties that I am preparing for a study of seminary faculties directed by Barbara Wheeler. When I began to research the topic, I thought that I could complete the work in a summer and that the total report might be 30 or 40 pages. This summer I mailed Barbara more than one hundred pages, and I am aware of how much has been omitted. The topic was much broader than I had supposed and, like most of human life, more complicated than first supposed. Seminary faculties did not develop out of a single impulse. Instead, a variety of social forces--including denominational affiliation, wealth of institution, theological position, teaching load, and salary--shaped particular professors' apprehension of their work. These forces also influenced how society regarded individual seminary faculty members. An almost infinite distance separated the impoverished Baptist professors depicted in Sinclear Lewis' Elmer Gantry from such comparatively wealthy sophisticates as William Adams Brown.[1]

I have chosen the period from 1880 to 1957 for two principal reasons. Theologically, these years were the height of the debate over modernity. However individual professors resolved the issues, almost all had to struggle with the conundrums posed by three intellectual currents: the higher criticism of the Bible, the rise of the social sciences, and the new scientific understanding of humankind.[2] These issues did more than divide the seminary faculties into

[1] See Sinclear Lewis, Elmer Gantry

[2]William Adams Brown, "A Century of Theological Education, "The Journal of Religion, IV, no 4 (July 1926.). Brown listed four great intellectual movements that effected seminary curricula: 1. Darwin, 2. higher criticism, 3. the new sociology, 4. the new psychology. Niebuhr-Williams-Gustafson made the issue even clearer. "It is not enough to say that philosophy, psychology, and sociology are necessary to the understanding of certain aspects of the minister's task. . .These and other disciplines are essential to the full understanding of the Christian faith

two warring camps, although they did do that, and the division is still unhealed. The technical nature of the questions demanded a higher level of expertise and preparation than traditional theology. A Moses Stuart, first professor of Bible at Andover, could prepare himself to teach Old Testament with a lexicon and a grammar; less than a century later, a Charles Briggs, Union's noted Hebrew scholar, needed far more resources.

Second, in this period seminaries advanced as institutions, increasing their endowments, faculties, and student bodies. Three comprehensive studies of theological education (Robert Kelly, William Adam Brown and Mark May, and H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, and James M. Gustafson) showed that the institutions that trained ministers improved steadily. The then American Association of Theological schools deserves much of the credit for this progress. While the accreditation standards of the Association were modest, most schools had to stretch to meet them. In the process, they became far more consciousness of what made a good theological education.

The ideal of the professional dominated thought about the seminary in this period.[3] Professionalism has a long history. Yet, the extended period of American economic growth that followed the Civil War made it an important feature of industrial American society. In part, the visibility of professionalism came from the maturation of the country. In the early national period, the need for professional services on the frontier and in rural communities tended to lower traditional professional standards. Someone had to draw wills, argue in criminal cases, care for the sick, preach sermons, baptize children or believers. People volunteered to perform these functions. Few such American practitioners had formal training, and many who did, received it in a brief apprenticeship or, sometimes, in an even shorter

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itself." p. 86.

[3] See Glenn T. Miller, . The discussion in Burton Bledstein. The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976) and in Andrew Abbott, The System of the Professions: An Essay on Expert Knowledge (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago, 1988) is presupposed throughout this article.

period of reading. New professionals could always learn what they needed on the job. Lacking professional associations, people trusted the market to remove the less able. Nonetheless, the chaos was almost intolerable. A lawyer was often a personable politician with an office and a sign; a medical doctor was frequently anyone with a black bag and buggy; and a minister was a public speaker with a Bible and a following.

America grew outgrew this stage rapidly.[4] By 1860 the conditions that contributed to relaxed qualifications had passed away in much of the East and Midwest. City attorneys had to know increasingly complex corporate codes, almost Byzantine tax legislation, and how to manage great estates. If law left any room for the self-made practitioner, it was at the bottom of the ladder, trying cases of petty thief, small claims, and foreclosures. A knowledge explosion in medicine made change in that profession more rapid. Pasteur proved that microorganisms caused many diseases; Lister showed that antiseptics prevented operative infections, and surgeons used ether as an anesthetic. The more physicians learned, the more material medical schools had to teach aspiring practitioners. The Flexner Report's (1910) stress on the scientific and clinical training of physicians was a common sense statement about how to train future doctors.[5]

A technical society's need for expertise expanded the variety of occupations that people designated as "professionals." In part, the expansion of the professions came from the promotion of older skilled positions to professional status. The traditional engineer was a craftsperson with a sharp eye, quick mind, and some skill with figures and drawings. Newer

[4] Not surprisingly, the commercial and manufacturing East first developed professional schools in law, medicine, and science. Business and government needed more in that region. The attempt to export western ideals to the East could be a disaster as in Jackson's disastrous attempt to democratize banking.

[5] Most of the changes advocated by Flexner were already in place before he published his famous report. See John S. Haller, American Medicine in Transition: 1840-1910. (Urbana: The University of Illinois, 1981). Modern medicine was expensive. Abraham Flexner, Medical Education in the United State and Canada (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1910); Abraham Flexner, Medical Education: A Comparative Study (New York: MacMillam, 1925).

engineers, graduates of schools like West Point, Cal Tech, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, studied science, knew calculus, and planned and executed large-scale projects. Such well-trained engineers first replaced the self-made on major projects and then gradually down the line. Similar changes happened to other occupations. Well-trained bookkeepers became university-trained accountants, and schoolteachers became educators. Amateurs even ceased to define baseball, the American game. Professional players were specialists at pitching, batting or fielding. Fans measured players' performances neatly, scientifically, by the endless streams of statistics printed in the daily papers.[6]

In no field was the transformation as evident as higher education. The traditional American college, modeled on the English system, aimed at the creation of ruling elite. Often, the instructors were introspective clergy with some social and intellectual skills.[7] At some schools, such as 1850s Yale, these learned amateurs established schools with scientific merit. But many pre-Civil War colleges were, at best, places of mental discipline, classical letters, and adolescent retreat and disorder. By 1870 a new type of teacher had become commonplace. Trained at a German or American graduate school, this type of professor mastered a clear body of material and was able to do independent research. These professional faculty members needed more elaborate (and expensive) laboratories, libraries, and classrooms to do their jobs.

Professional professors were expensive. The administrative and financial costs of the new education demanded educational bureaucracies, headed by imperial presidents. These entrepreneurs of erudition had to recreate educational institutions to attract the capital to

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[6]For the cult of efficiency and its relationship to professionalism, see Samuel Haber, Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Efficiency in the Progressive Era. 1890-1920 (University of Chicago, 1964).

[7]Traditional American education largely followed the English model that aimed at the education of an elite. While such institutions were often socially restricted, they often operated on an intellectual broad bottom. Few who afford to attend the schools failed to graduate. Princeton continued this model longer than most noted American colleges. See George Marsden, The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief (New York and others: Oxford University Press, 1994), chapter 12.

finance advanced study. William Rainey Harper, the first President of the University of Chicago and his sponsor, John D. Rockefeller, were brothers under the skin: the first was a master of educational form, the second of the corporation.

The organizational revolution began in those schools that sought university status. Harvard and Johns Hopkins, led by such brilliant Presidents as Charles Elliot [8]and Daniel Coit Gilman, set the pace with other schools following closely. The German universities may have provided some inspiration for the change. Gilman appealed to the German example in his publicity about Hopkins, which initially had no undergraduate program. As in Germany, the mark of the university was the combination of research and teaching. [9] Yet, the new world adaptation of the university was uniquely American and related to the American need to provide educational legitimacy for various occupations. Pure research was part of the American university, but so was forestry, accounting, commerce (later business), and education.

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[8]Hugh Hawkins, Between Harvard and America: The Educational Leadership of Charles Elliot (New York, 1973) is a classical account of the new development.

[9]One must be careful to nuance the theory that American higher education was a German import. Much of the prevailing wisdom on that subject rests on such works as Abraham Flexner, Universities: American, German, English (Oxford, 1930; reprint 1968) that idealized the German achievement. And that achievement was impressive. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, many Germany intellectuals believed that the University was a relict of the middle ages that ought to be abolished. The establishment of the new University of Berlin on the basis of a research ideal gave the institution new life and a deliberate policy of keeping the number of positions limited enabled the cream to rise, especially, in science. No intellectual could ignore such an intellectual record. See Daniel Fallon, The German University: A Heroic Ideal in Conflict with the Modern World (Boulder, Colorado: Colorado Associated University Press, 1980) and Charles E, McClelland, State, Society and University in Germany, 1700-1914 (Cambridge et al: The Cambridge University Press, 1980). But German schools rarely fit American's images of them, and few Americans discussed the German achievement accurately. The real product, for example, of Flexner's studies was not the university itself but the research institutes, such as the Institute for Advanced Studies, which he helped to create.

The mark of the new professionalism in higher education was the research doctorate.[10] The Doctor of Philosophy or the Doctor of Theology degree had nothing to do with success in either classroom or church. The goal of the degree was to produce a graduate who knew a particular discipline's literature sufficiently to participate in the quest for new knowledge. The mastery of the literature and teaching were two sides of the same coin. Careful study of the literature enabled the prospective researcher to develop a sense of the discipline as a whole. The research for the dissertation confirmed this knowledge. Later, as an instructor, a Ph.D. might lead students through the history of investigation of the field, teach them the various tools needed to understand that history, and guide them toward their own independent thinking.

The new instructors reshaped higher education. In a silent, but swift, revolution, the new professional faculties replaced the traditional liberal arts program with a more elective curriculum. The new program stressed the physical sciences, social sciences, English and other modern languages, and the fine arts. Although some schools retained a Latin requirement for some years, the classical languages became only another possible major or minor. The transformation was almost complete. Few subjects taught in 1900 were in the 1850 curriculum. In turn, each increase in the number of subjects required schools to hire more professionally qualified teachers.

The Ph.D. also affected classroom teaching. Some methods, such as the recitations favored by many ante-bellum instructors, fell into disrepute (although they were not abandoned completely).[11] Other approaches became more common. The "classic" lecture course generally began with a presentation of the bibliography prepared by the instructor, went on to discuss the current state of the discipline, and concluded with a more or less

[10]In 1924, Kelly found that 42 per cent of seminary faculties had doctorates. In 1954, Niebuhr, Gustafson, and Williams found that more than 65 percent had an earned doctorate. In general, the better endowed a school, the more doctorates on the Faculty.

[11]Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, one of the earliest schools to grant a Th.D. in theology, ironically, retained recitation into the 1940s.

comprehensive summary of what scholars knew. In addition, the seminar--a teaching method widely used in Ph.D. programs--became a popular model for courses. The basic task of the seminar was the production of short piece of solid research that enabled the professor to gauge the ability of the student to conduct independent studies. The "term" or "research" paper became as important in many classes as the examination or the reading list.

The more advanced seminaries, particularly Andover, followed the universities and other wealthy divinity schools quickly accepted the same standards. At least in New England, seminary graduates provided the leadership that enabled the colleges to make similar changes.[12] Besides wealth, the factor that most directly influenced when a particular school would change direction was the size and age of its faculty. A school with a very young faculty in 1870, for example, would often be less radical than a school that added new faculty members in the 1890s and 1900s.

Seminaries were at ease in the university world, partially because many schools had adopted some university standards before the Civil War. When Andover Seminary was founded in 1808, the Faculty was already as specialized as the theological faculty of the University of Berlin. Andover's trustees hired separate teachers for theology, bible, and preaching, and projected a professorship in Church History when practicable. The school soon had five professors. Other seminaries, even if finances confined them for a season to a faculty of one or two instructors, aspired to a faculty with four or more members. Further, German Universities influenced American seminaries as much or more as they did colleges and

[12]"The student of the twentieth century must reckon the liberal takeover of the Andover Theological Seminary and through it the traditional New England colleges, a fortunate event. The standards of scholarship now prized by the New England colleges could not have attained so long as the colleges were under the command of creeds. The intellect could gain priority in college concerns until it liberated itself from the necessity of reconciling its findings with revealed truths beyond the rational ken of man." George A. Peterson, The New England College in the Age of the University (Amherst: Amherst College Press), p165.

aspiring universities. Even before the Civil War, such theological leaders as Edwards Amasa Park, Bela Bates Edwards, and Charles Hodge avidly followed German developments in theology. Equally important, a steady stream of young Americans theologians, including Charles Hodge and Bernas Sears, went on pilgrimage to the great Protestant universities of Germany. Yale introduced a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in 1860 with other schools following shortly thereafter. To prefer the Ph.D. for faculty appointments was a natural step, at least in the more traditional fields.[13] So complete was the change to a degreed faculty that in the 1930s, even a theological natural like Reinhold Niebuhr had difficulty being accepted.

The Doctor of Philosophy degree was not the only German import. In 1831 Edward Robinson wrote an influential article, "Theological Education in Germany," in which he subjected the German system to a thorough analysis. The essay was not short. Published in three successive numbers of Robinson's journal, the piece was in fact a small book. In these articles, Robinson noted that the definition of a German university was quite different from the Anglo-Saxon belief in a place for higher learning. He wrote:

> A German university is essentially a professional school, or rather an assemblage of such schools, comprising the four faculties of theology, law, medicine, and philosophy; the latter of which corresponds to what is elsewhere called the faculty of letters and sciences, and encloses everything not strictly comprehended in the other three.14

The article also perceptively noted that the "profession" of the faculty members at these schools was not teaching. Instead, their real profession was the area in which they did research or searched for new knowledge. Professors were "historians," "hebraists," or sociologists. In other words, the instructors were people of "thery," not practice, who were devoted to the expansion of knowledge. The German governments spent fortunes equipping

[13]The gentleman theologian remained longest in preaching where some seminaries preferred to call an established clergyperson, especially one with contacts in the denomination, to an individual trained in the new discipline of speech or one of the new specialist in rhetoric. Doctoral programs in preaching developed slowly.

14 Robinson, *op. cit.*, 1.

the schools to stand on the intellectual frontiers by providing generous subsides, large libraries and well-furnished laboratories.

The new style of teaching took time, considerable time, and that changed the life of seminary faculties considerably. To prepare the traditional recitation for the first time took only a few hours of study. Once the teacher learned the text, the instructor could get by with ten minutes of solid preparation. To a lesser extent, the same was true of the long dogmatic lectures of such professors as Charles Hodge or Edwards Amasa Parks. While those might take considerable initial work, they did not need frequent revision. However, to use the new style effectively teachers had to be current in their fields, and this involved hours of library and literary work. In addition, papers and tests, unlike recitations, required careful grading.

Seminaries came to see the need for leaves of absence. [15] Seminary faculties in this period were deeply concerned with the state of their art. Robinson asked the Union trustees for a year in Palestine before beginning his teaching. Others, especially in Bible, often went to Germany for a year of language, reflection, and redirection at some time in their tenure. If these teachers were rarely intellectual giants--the best theology was still done abroad--they were unusually diligent and hard-working. The shelves of seminary libraries are still lined with the products of their erudition. While it was sometime before seminaries established a regular system of sabbatical leaves,[16] the better schools were generous with leaves of absence for study from 1890 onward.

Further, the seminaries already had a tradition of research and publication that was far of that of the antebellum college. Many denominations and individual seminaries published

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[15]An excellent description of the work load of the new style of teaching can be found in William R. Miller, "The Professors of Union Theological Seminary." Cited in Brown-May, The Institutions That Train Ministers. Vol 3. The Education of American Ministers (New York: The Institute for Religious and Social Research, 1934), p.117.

[16]Regular sabbatical programs began after 1960 as more and more seminaries sought and received regional accreditation.

theological journals. While these periodicals differed in quality, even from number to number, they were often quite sophisticated. Reading them, a careful scholar would find an accurate and current discussion of the European debates over biblical criticism and of the theologies of Schleiermacher, Tholuck, and later Dorner.

American theology was thus, ready to form academic guilds before the arrival of the university. The university and more prosperous conditions provided the push toward fuller organization. Aided by the railroads, the development of large urban centers, and improved mails, American theologians began to meet together and to set, at least informally, standards for guild admission. For example, seminary scholars established the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Society of Church History in 1880 and 1888 respectively. These societies formed an interdenominational "old boys" network that recommended able younger scholars when positions became available.

Opportunities for publication also increased. Besides the journals of the theological societies, seminary faculties had other periodicals open to them. The denominations continued to publish their journals and seminary professors used the many biblical and religious journals of the University of Chicago. In addition, the leading seminaries, including Andover and Princeton, continued to publish their own reviews. In some denominations, professors met regularly to share their concerns. For example, Baptist professors met together in the 1880s and 1890s to exchange papers and published the proceedings of their meetings.[17]

The secular press was also willing to support seminary publications. From its beginning, the University of Chicago Press was open to serious theological works, and the expansion of University presses in the 1920s increased the number of outlets for serious studies. The denominational presses and such market publishers as Charles Scribner and Sons sought out books authored by seminary teachers. Energetic or well-placed seminary teachers, such as B. B. Warfield, could produce more than a hundred articles and books in a career.

[17]The meetings were discontinued due to tensions between the more liberal and the more conservative members.

Ironically, the literary production of seminary professors may have exceeded that of their university counterparts. Until the 1960s, there were more ministers than college professors in the United States. While many clergy were not interested in theology or serious religious reading, the number that had such interests was probably as great as or greater than the number of practitioners that supported other academic guilds.

Specialization was a mark of the new academics. What happened was that the knowledge in a particular area became too extensive for one person to comprehend. Following the dictates of efficiency, administrators divided the work of teaching and research in that area among several teachers.[18] Thus New Testament scholars specialized in the study of the text, church historians in American religious history, or systematic theologians in a particular perspective. Often this meant that the unity of the Faculty was hard to find:

> A faculty often appears to be merely a gathering of highly independent entrepreneurs, each paid to operate his own private concession stand in a "plant" maintained by a board of trustees with funds the president can persuade "the constituency" to contribute. Each brings to his own national association of the manufacturers of knowledge in his specialty in whose meetings he finds consolation with those who speak his dialect and refuge from his immediate colleagues who do not. [19]

However, the small size of many theological schools helped to check Faculty specialization. Almost all seminary professors, after all, were responsible for a survey course, and an elective

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[18]Academic specialization is one response to the inherent limitations of the human mind. Individuals increasingly cannot expect to cover such major areas as the social sciences or the humanities. It is increasingly odd that we think undergraduate students can and should master such broad fields.
Burton Clark. "The Problem of Complexity in Modern Higher Education" in European and American Universities Since 1880,"ed. by Sheldon Rothblatt and Björn Wittrock, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). p. 274

[19]Sidney Mead, Church History Explained, Church History, 32 (March 1963) 19 (check page)

system arrived late in many seminaries.[20] Nonetheless, the fragmentation of studies did affect the electives offered by particular professors and their publications and fields of research.

Professionalism made many theological teachers independent and confident. Seminary teachers knew that they had a right to their views, and they did not intent to have less informed people dictate their conclusions. While the churches tried only a few for heresy, the experience did not cow the accused (such as Hinckley Mitchell, Charles Briggs, Crawford Toy, and Henry Preserved Smith). The professors had reached their conclusions through sound methods, thorough research, and the careful analysis of original and secondary sources. The ability of the small handful convicted of heresy to find new positions was a strong indication that they were in line with larger scholarly patterns. In short, seminary professors were part of the elite of those who know.

One mark of professional status was the growing recognition of the seminary professor as an "expert," parallel to the experts in other fields. Before William Rainey Harper became President of the University of Chicago, he was a one-man biblical cottage industry with speaking engagements at Chautauqua's, colleges, universities, and churches. William Adams Brown, the liberal Union (NY) theologian, made himself an authority on the ecumenical movement. During the First World War Brown served as the Protestant advisor to the government on religion and the military. Further, Brown served frequently as a consultant to the Federal Council of Churches. In the next generation, *Time Magazine's* cover featured Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr's speaking schedule was so full that his students remembered him bringing his packed bags to Friday classes so that he could get to the train station faster. The network of church-related colleges and campus ministries kept lesser lights busy as well. Some denominations also found seminary professors useful consultants and engaging speakers.

The professionalization of seminary faculties made them more aware of their dual role as professors in the academy and ministers in the church. In the *Advancement of Theological*

[20]The tendency of seminaries was to add a required course or two whenever a new department was created.

*Education,* Niebuhr, Williams and Gustafson noted:

> There is first the double responsibility of the theological teacher for scholarship and for churchmanship. He is a faculty member in a school and responsible first to the school. But he is usually also a minister of the church and of his denomination. He frequently serves on denominational boards in addition to his activities in a local church.[21]

The nature of this church relationship, however, was not always clear. My own guess is that many teachers, especially in schools like Union, Yale, and Hartford, found their actual ecclesiastical home in the future great church of the ecumenical movement.[22] By locating the church apart from the empirical churches that faculty serviced as experts, professors could claim a transcendent loyalty, while retaining proper scholarly distance from the object of study.

The professionalism of seminary faculties suggested a new model of theological education: the professional school. Despite the appeal of University founders to supposed German precedents, the American university was not primarily a place of abstract learning and careful research. American schools, especially those schools established under the Morrill Act (1862), prepared people for practical and efficient vocations. The meaning of the Bachelor of Arts changed. In 1800 the degree distinguished its bearer as a member of the learned elite. By 1900 the degree's primary value was as preparation for business, education, or law. In this milieu, many believed that the seminary's place in higher education was as a professional

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[21] Advancement, p56.

[22] "Most appear to belong to the highly abstract and conveniently "invisible" church whose fulfillments are "beyond history" and not of this world. Hence, they tend to be a t best tolerant, at worst contemptuous of the actual institutional incarnations of this church in our denominations and congregations. Therefore much of their written work is addressed only to their fellow denizens of the self-made ghetto in which they live, and is almost totally unrelated to the experienced order of the mill run of preachers and church members." Sidney Mead, "Reinterpretation in American Church History " in Jerald Bauer, ed. Reinterpretation in American Church history (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1968), 176.
Care must be taken here not to be too inclusive. Southern Baptist theological professors were in the vanguard of those creating a denominational consciousness among the very desperate churches of the American South.

school similar to the emerging schools of education or social work. If the seminary was often physically separated from the university, this was because of its sectarian character in an increasing non-sectarian educational world.[23] As professional schools, the seminaries could be of the university without being in it.

Equally important, many believed that the professionalization of the ministry was the best way to deal with the crises of the post-civil war church.[24] After 1880, many observers believed that the ministry was in trouble. The number of people preparing for ministry was apparently in decline, especially in proportion to the growth of the population, and attendance at worship was markedly low. Although both genders contributed to the pew drain, males were often the first out of the church door. Attempts to prove the masculinity of faith through "muscular" Christianity often failed to do more than fill YMCA gyms. The problem was more evident in the cities. Not only were the cities ethnically diverse, but Protestants in the city appeared more secular than those in the countryside. Horace Bushnell, always a little ahead and optimistic, praised modern recreation as a God-given chance for renewal. However, his near contemporary Henry Ward Beecher knew that he was competing as much with the railroad and the country weekend as with the devil and his minions. Simultaneously, the older European model of the Protestant pastor as theologian was declining. In contrast, Americans believed that their ministry need to be more practical, more efficient, more concerned with ordinary life.[25] Both to attract men and to reach the cities, the ministry needed to become a

[23]Many seminary leaders hoped for closer ties to universities and colleges at this time, but those hopes ran counter to the increasing tendency for higher education to be conducted in a non-sectarian environment. By the time of the establishment of the Carnegie Institute of Higher Learning in 1905, universities and colleges found it hard to justify the existence of any but the most formal ecclesiastical ties.

[24]Paul Carter, The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1877) might serve as a metaphor for the latter part of the nineteenth century. There was a widespread spiritual lack of ease that made religion, if still honored, feel somewhat fragile and broken,

[25]American theologians had often defended their churches on the grounds that they were more practical than their European counterparts. For an interesting development of this, see Philip

modern profession.

A parallel existed between the faculties and the students they hoped to train. Just as seminary faculties benefited from their professional status, so they expected their students to gain prestige from the public's recognition of ministerial expertise. Ideally, professional ministers were to master all aspects of the work of their congregations. People were to judge ministers by the same criteria as they judged other professional members of their community: expertise, efficiency, and performance. In other words, the minister had to demonstrate had "know-how:" how to preach, how to direct the youth group, how to educate the young, and how to counsel the bereaved. Although no one officially discarded the older sources of clerical status (esoteric knowledge of divine mysteries, apostolic succession, or ordination), professionalism was the new source of ministerial authority.

The professional model of theological education had clear implications for seminary instructors. In 1899 William Rainey Harper published "Shall the Theological Curriculum be Modified and How?"[26] Harper's piece is one of the rare prophetic pieces in the history of theological education. As he saw the matter, the seminary would have to step back from its purely theological tasks to make room for new disciplines. Compulsory Hebrew, for example, would have to be discarded. In its place, the seminaries would need to add courses in sociology, economics, and science. As in social work and education, field education and clinics were to play an important role. Further, Harper was an avid supporter of the religious education movement. Religious Education was not traditional catechetics which had taught people about religion. Rather, the goal of the new religious education was to rear children with vision, character, and responsibility.

Harper's article did not lead to a rash of new hiring's, but it did point to a future. When seminaries found new funds, they gradually added representatives of such new disciplines as religious education, social ethics, and psychology. Most schools struggled to find someone

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Schaff, America

[26]American Journal of Theology

with sufficient pastoral experience to transform student employment into educationally fruitful field education. The three surveys indicated almost identical problems in attaining this later goal.

The ideal of the professional minister was also advanced by the so-called Third Great Awakening that occupied American Protestants from the 1880s to the 1910s. During this period, American lay ministries became increasingly visible and influential. The Sunday school, for example, reached its zenith as thousands of freshly washed children marched down the streets of the nation's largest cities in well-cheered parades. The American missionary effort abroad soared. In addition to the more traditional ministry of evangelization, Americans abroad developed large networks of schools, colleges, and hospitals. This massive effort was reinforced by the Student Volunteer Movement that set as its goal "the evangelization of the world in this generation." The cost of these ministries, of course, rose even more rapidly than their numbers. But American Protestants were more than ready for the challenge. Not only did the denominations raise their budgets by appealing to the new idea of "stewardship" but equally important methods of mass fundraising, many still used today, were employed by a series of "movements" such as the Men and Religion Forward movement and the Interchurch World Movement.

Seminaries benefited from the excitement in money and enrollments. What was more important, however, was the seminary's contract with the spirit of the new lay ministries. Despite some resistance from more traditional faculty members, the schools began to create new professorships in the practical fields. Religious Education was the most prolific of these. This new discipline was an interesting amalgamation of crusade, philosophy, and science. Religious educators aimed at nothing less than the moral transformation of the nation. The energy that fired the movement in time generated courses in other areas, such as pastoral psychology. These new disciplines helped to make plausible the seminary's claim to be professional schools and not simply liberal arts.

The most important influence on seminary faculties was the wealth or lack of it at the schools where they taught. At the top of the scale were such schools as Union (NY), Princeton,

Chicago, and their peers. Strong schools summoned a variety of resources to their service. For instance, the wealthier schools were often blessed by strong executive leadership. Although Presidents did many things, their primary duty was to raise the funds needed for their schools programs. A school with strong leadership had substantial endowments and strong lists of supporting churches and individuals. Poorer schools attracted less able leaders and far less funding.

In the wealthiest schools, salaries were commensurate with that of private university faculties. At other schools, the financial rewards were significantly less, and, at the poorer schools, genteel poverty was not unknown.[27] During the 1930s depression, the administration urged faculty members at Fort Worth's Southwestern Seminary to harvest and market grapefruit from the Seminary's lands to supplement their salaries. At other poorer schools, Faculty members preached almost every week, a few from choice, most from necessity. Although the three surveys of theological education indicated that seminaries made much financial progress, the same surveys also complained of the financial problems facing ordinary seminary teachers. Throughout its history, the American Association of Theological Schools has struggled to improve faculty remuneration.

But income was only one consequence of the economic differential. American theological education existed on different tiers. The university schools and a few, older very established seminaries represented the highest level. While these schools did have some financial restraints, their Presidents recruited larger faculties that taught more specialized courses. Often there were two or more teachers in such disciplines as church history, and their practical fields had teachers who offered multiple courses in religious education and preaching.

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[27]Kelly, Theological Education in America, p. 232-33. Meanwhile the plight of many seminary professors is most serious. If they depend on their salaries, they do not have the ordinary physical comforts of life. They work under deprivations which are generally unknown and which the Church would probably not allow, if the facts were set forth. . ..The churches should know the cost of a theological education and should pay the bill.

Many of these schools had a modified elective system in place by the 1890s, and all offered an enriched program. In contrast, the poorer schools struggled with faculties of two, three, four, or five members with newer subjects often added to an existing teacher's duties. The elective system did not come at these needy institutions until the 1920s. [28]

Other aspects of the different tiers were proportional. The library remained the primary way in which Faculty members "kept up in their field" and conducted their research. By 1890 such schools as Union and Princeton had extensive libraries, including special research collections.[29] Simultaneously, small schools-- such as Newton (Baptist) --often had fewer than 5,000 volumes, many of dubious quality. Library improvement was an arduous task. The cost of books was high (even in the halcyon days of the 1950s paperback revolution), and libraries were labor intensive institutions.

The gradual improvement of libraries was a major faculty concern. The available library resources determined whether the members of a particular faculty were able to do the work that would make them professionally mobile. A professor at Union (NY) or Princeton had daily exposure to resources that faculty from smaller schools required a leave of absence to obtain. Needless to say, in the world of scholar publishing, the rich got richer, while the poor got

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[28]For a variety of reasons, the seminaries had difficulty with the elective system and resisted attempts to put it in place. Niebuhr-Williams-Gustafson wrote: The second problem of the curriculum arises out of the tendency to prescribe a rigid course of study to all students. While there is some indication that tendency has been increased by the movement towards overloading, on the whole the idea of the prescribed curriculum has been traditional in seminaries. Some of the reasons for it will be pointed out below in the discussion of the unity of theological study. In part, however, the practice of prescribing the course of study derives from the days when all students could be expected to come to seminary with approximately the same background of humanistic studies in college; in part from theories of education and even of theology that are suspicious of the exercise of independence by students. Advancement. p. 81.

The extent to which all of Christian theology has been influenced by what Edward Farley calls the "House of Authority" is crucial to curriculum building. There is a tendency for theological professors to believe that they have the found the truth--even if the truth is relativism.

[29]The MacAlpine Collection of Puritan texts at Union are an excellent example of the resources available to the larger schools.

poorer.

Finances also limited institutional reform. Money enabled two of the most successful and imaginative turn of the century Presidents--Walter Moore of Union (Richmond) and Douglas MacKenzie of Hartford--to recreate their schools. Inspired by the New South dream of a manufacturing and urban South, Moore moved his tiny rural seminary to Richmond, built a new campus, and helped to found a coordinate School of Christian Education. MacKenzie constructed a theological university in which students studied for diverse ministries in schools of theology, missions, and education. Such administrators, of course, blessed few institutions, but their successes drove other seminary leaders to innovate with different styles of teaching and learning.

Wealth was especially crucial for advance in the practical fields. In the poorer schools, the weekend employment of students was an unofficial scholarship fund on which the very future of the school might depend.[30] Such placements had to be protected and nurtured. Only such wealthy schools as Union, Chicago, and Yale could initially afford to demand that students' placement had educational as well as financial remuneration. In these schools the seminary assumed the burden of paying for the student's first year in the field. More middling institutions tried both to use placements as scholarships and as education. The three surveys showed that this rarely worked.

Wealth greatly limited the development of theological faculties among African-Americans. Most black schools were established by Northern Evangelicals in the wake of the Civil War, and these institutions survived because of contributions from these sources.

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[30]"A large proportion of American Protestantism, including Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Disciples, depends for its ministry in part upon men who are getting their formal training while serving as pastors. Some schools in this group do not in principle allow the first year student to have a pastorate; but many exceptions are made when it is necessary that the student make his way financially. The parsonage supplied to the family by the church may be the key item. In a large number of schools over half the students are pastors of churches; and in not a few the figure is as high as 80 per cent." Niebuhr-Williams-Gustafson, Advancement, p. 115.

However, Northern intellectuals and church people followed the Republican Party in all but deserting the freedmen in the 1880s. The Rev. Benjamin May, a graduate of the University of Chicago, did provide much leadership in the 1940s and 50s.

Within the financial limits of their institutions, American theological faculties gradually established themselves as professional educators, similar to their counterparts in the universities and better colleges. Over sixty years of hard work, they attained their goal of making the seminary into a professional school with a highly educated and competent faculty. In the process, some of their number--Walter Rauschenbusch, William Adams Brown, and the Niebuhrs--became world-known leaders in their disciplines. Less prominent teachers were sound enough to be internationally respected in the fields.

III

The year, 1957, did not mark the end of the professional understanding of theological education. In many ways that ideal still provides many schools with needed coherence and direction and, despite the changes in the accreditation process passed at the last biennial meeting of the ATS, the professionalism of faculties and graduates remains a guiding light for seminaries as a whole. If nothing else, professionalism provides seminary faculties and their students with a modicum of public standing and a rationale for theological study that is not qualitatively or quantitatively different from that of other university professional schools.

Yet, the light from this source is not as bright as it once was. The traditional American trust in the "can-do" professional has declined somewhat. The nation no longer trusts the brightest and best to do what is most reasonable and moral and, perhaps, has less confidence in the power of education to promote the common good. At the same time we have come to ask some serious questions about theological education itself. Theologians could justify the professional model of ministry in two ways. On the one hand, the professional model fit nicely into American liberalism. Liberals stressed the ability of culture, at least at its highest, to bear the marks of the divine, and professionalism had deep affinities to the American belief that only merit should mark distinctions between individual. In that sense, professionalism was an inherently democratic understanding of ministry. On the other hands, conservatives could see

professionalism in terms of the subtle interaction of common and saving grace. Just as classical dogmatism borrowed logical rigor from pagan philosophy, so the modern ministry might borrow the ethics and techniques of professionalism from modern experience.

These explanations were sufficient as long as theological educators drew most of their understandings of their task from the Reformed and Lutheran traditions. By the late 1960s, however, Protestant and Catholic educators were in dialogue with each other. One consequence of that dialogue was that Protestant educators began to take such Catholic concepts as formation with real seriousness, and these ideas could be assimilated to classical or liberal Protestant concepts only with great difficulty. After all, it is one thing to train an individual to be a self-directed, rational reflective practitioner, guided by the best insights into past professional practice, and another to shape a person so that they can empty themselves enough to receive and transmit sacramental grace. Such ecumenical pressures raised the question of "what was theological about theological education" in sharp terms. And when put in that way, serious doubts about the enterprise were inevitable. Deconstruction followed naturally.

Finally, the relative decline of the mainstream churches has weakened the professional ideal in theological education. Professionalism was a way of viewing theological education that placed it near the center of modern intellectual and cultural experience. The professional minister was the person who had the skills and knowledge to help educated people resolve doubts, to understand the ethical and moral needs of diverse people, and to provide a measure of cultural leadership. At a minimum, no parishioner had reason to be ashamed of their pastor at public events. But Protestantism no longer stands at the American cultural center, and ministers trained to stand there often find themselves trying to cope with their own marginalization. Having spread a marvelous feast, no one comes to dinner or, at least, those that the clergy invited are not currently at the table.

Whither theological faculties and their students? I admit that I have a love for the values of the older professional model. The well-argued paper with skillful crafted notes, the skillful composed sermon, the thoughtful statement of ethical and moral options, represent

many of my deepest values. And I do not want the churches, even if their numbers fall to two or three, to be lead by scalawags and ignoramuses. I also do not want to see what was one of the church's noblest educational visions destroyed inch by inch by compromises that erode educational quality. After all, one can only cut the reading so far or simplify such assignments as research papers, verbatims, and the like so much before the education given and received becomes something else. And such erosions, like the defacing of a fine portrait, make one guilty of what the ancients called impiety and more modern people have called selling out. Rather, if we stand toward the end of one phase of the church's intellectual pilgrimage, let us seize our own moment with the strength that we can muster and do something different. There was a time when the creators of the present model stood the other side of our present hopes; may we stand the other side of someone else's future.