

GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

During the past triennium, the General Theological Seminary has made significant progress and measurable improvements in the area of program, enrollment, communications, fund raising, administrative support and strategic planning.

The Master of Divinity program has been strengthened through a revised tutorial component, which aims at greater integration of academic work and ministerial formation. A newly designed field education program is also being inaugurated. The core curriculum has become more cross-disciplinary through intentional efforts at collaborative and interdisciplinary teaching methods.

The Th.D. and Advanced Degree programs (S.T.M., M.A.) have expanded under the leadership of Professor Bill Franklin, who was instrumental in establishing a new faculty, student, and library consortium with Columbia University.

Formation for new bishops through the College for Bishops has added a fourth component, "The Bishop as Episkope: The Bishop as Leader, Manager and Administrator," and will be extended to experienced bishops, Lutheran bishops and other bishops within the Anglican Communion, owing to a generous grant from the Lilly Foundation.

A new collaborative venture with the School of Theology of the University of the South, The Church Development Institute, offers intensive and in-depth education for lay and ordained leaders under the direction of the Reverends Bob Gallagher and Melissa Skelton.

Under the able administration of Professor Thomas Breidenthal, the Center for Jewish/Christian Relations has grown both in terms of student involvement and in the number of programs and worship services it provides.

The Center for Christian Spirituality, under the able leadership of Professor Margaret Guenther, completed its best-subscribed year ever and will continue to expand with the appointment of Philip Sheldrake, who begins his ministry as the Director of the Center.

In support of the various programs for the formation of ordained and lay leadership, the St. Mark's Library, after extensive renovation has now become fully automated with the Burke Library at the Union Theological Seminary. A new position for the special and rare book collection in the person of Isaac Gewirtz rounds out the library staff and should strengthen the support of all the degree programs here. It will also enable the Seminary to provide research support for scholars throughout the Anglican Communion given the extensive Anglicana collection.

In the face of a flat, if not declining enrollment for Episcopal seminaries, it is noteworthy that the General Seminary, under the leadership of Director of Admissions Toni Daniels, experienced the largest M.Div. enrollment in nine years this past fall and the largest enrollment of any Episcopal seminary. In addition, the Th.D. program has grown from seven students in 1993 to nineteen students this year. This past summer, both the Church Development Institute and the Center for Christian Spirituality had all-time high enrollments as well.

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Communications have improved markedly with the expansion of *The General Seminary News*, along with two new publications from the Rev. Jessica Hatch, Director of Alumni/ae and Church Relations, and Rick Cosnotti, Director of Development. In addition to an expanded catalogue and view book, Bruce Parker, Director of Communications, has developed a new audio video cassette series.

Several major gifts from individual donors and foundations have been received over the past year in support of new programs and expanded programs. It is anticipated that the Seminary will launch a capital campaign during the next triennium with the goal of increasing scholarships, program, and the development, expansion, and renovation of facilities. A most successful campaign to renovate the Holtkamp Organ was completed with Professor David Hurd performing at the dedicatory recital on Wednesday, February 5, 1997.

After an extensive administrative restructuring to include the appointment of James Dill as the new Chief Financial Officer, long-standing problems in the area of financial reporting have been corrected, along with the development of financial and personnel policies, which were non-existent. Such restructuring has also resulted in significant improvements to the physical plant and the appearance and upgrading of our facilities. Work is currently underway to develop the technology both within the Seminary and even more importantly, outside the Seminary in the preparation and delivery of programs through down-linking and interactive learning.

Foundational to the significant progress that has been made during this past triennium has been the ongoing work of the Strategic Planning Committee under the leadership of Trustee, Richard Pivrotto, and the Rev. Melissa Skelton, Vice President of Administration. The Strategic Planning Committee, building on the vision statement below, which was adopted by the Board of Trustees on 15 May 1996, has developed a strategic plan for the next five years with measurable goals and steps for implementation and procedures for ongoing evaluation. It is anticipated that the strategic plan, growing out of the vision statement, will be adopted by the Board in May 1997. Many of the initiatives outlined in the vision statement and strategic plan are already well underway and producing positive results.

In sharing the following vision statement, it is important to note that this summary version of the vision statement has been a collaborative effort that has included students, faculty, administrative staff, alumni/ae, the bishops and clergy of the Church and Trustees of the Seminary.

**“BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST UNTIL WE ALL
ATTAIN TO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH”
A VISION FOR THE GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

The mission of the Church is the basis for the vision of the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church. As such, any vision of the Seminary as merely an educational institution in service to the Church must be rejected because the Seminary is in its very essence the Church, the new life in Christ guided by the Holy Spirit. This new life expresses itself in prayer, study, reflection, service, life in community and hospitality grounded in the authority of scripture, tradition and reason.

In the epistle to the Ephesians, God's eternal purpose in establishing and completing the universal Church of Jesus the Christ is set forth. The epistle provides us with both a contemporary and compelling mission for the Church and The General Theological Seminary today. It exhorts us to maintain the unity of the faith and also issues a call to ministry:

... each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift ... that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ ... speaking the truth in love, we must grow up ... into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. (Ephesians 4: 7-16).

The Book of Common Prayer outlines how the Church is to pursue the mission described in Ephesians, "to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ ... as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace and love ... through the ministry of all its members." (BCP, An Outline of the Faith, p. 855.)

Such guidance from scripture and tradition has led the Seminary, since its inception, to discern for each succeeding generation how it is called to equip all baptized Christians for the work of ministry. Such discernment also requires the use of reason in understanding and interpreting the cultural context in which we exercise this ministry. Our Anglican credo *lex orandi lex credendi* (first we pray, then we believe) is basic to The General Theological Seminary's tradition of the centrality of the liturgy, spiritual discipline, academic excellence and faithful service to the wider community.

Through prayerful discernment and guidance by the Holy Spirit, a new vision deeply rooted in the Church's and General's tradition has been given to the Seminary: *a theological education for ministry is the birthright of every baptized Christian*. Central to such a vision is empowering and enabling the Church to provide such an education for collaborative leadership among all orders of ministry. Thus, in our secular and pluralistic society in which religion and life have become increasingly individualistic and privatized, formation to foster a secure Christian identity for the ministry of all the baptized is fundamental to the mission of the Church. The need for such formation is foundational for the vision of the General Theological Seminary and includes the following elements:

"Building up of the Body of Christ": Service to the Anglican Communion

- *Formation of Priests*: To strengthen the M.Div. program by addressing the reform needed in theological education in overcoming its present disciplinary fragmentation and theory/practice split. The goal is comprehensive and integrated theological formation for the informed practice of priestly ministry.
- *Formation of Bishops*: Building on our initial success, to extend the College for Bishops to the wider Anglican Communion and our other ecumenical partners as an international program for the formation of new and experienced judicatory leaders.
- *Formation of Deacons*: Given the technology for interactive learning, to explore the development of educational programs for deacons that would include both residential and distance-learning components.
- *The Formation of Teachers and Scholars*: To expand the Th.D. and S.T.M. programs, drawing on our distinguished faculty and exceptional library, for the formation of leaders

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and scholars within the Church and for educational institutions. Such expansion of these advanced degrees will provide the “critical mass” of scholars needed in recognition that theology is a collaborative enterprise.

- *Formation of Lay and Clergy Leaders Within Congregations and Dioceses:* To strengthen the Seminary’s Parish Development Institute, Center for Christian Spirituality and Instituto Pastoral Hispano for the formation of lay and clergy leaders as they attempt to revitalize and provide spiritual grounding for congregations, clusters, regional ministries, dioceses, and other organizations. Within this effort we will explore appropriate new degrees for these leaders.
- *The St. Mark’s Library:* Building on the efforts already begun, strengthen the St. Mark’s Library to support all of the Seminary’s current and future educational programs. This will include collaboration with other libraries and the integration of new communication technologies.

“Until we all attain to the unity of the faith”: Engagement with the World

- *To establish new opportunities for multi-cultural and cross-cultural education* growing out of the need for global and cultural understanding and drawing on the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of New York City.
- *To increase our ecumenical collaboration* through continued bilateral conversations, ongoing dialogue with worldwide catholic churches, and continued leadership within the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches.
- *To increase our interfaith dialogue and worship*, drawing on the resources of our New York City location and on our own Center for Jewish/Christian Studies and Relations.
- *To embrace New York City* and increase and make more intentional the connection with and the use of the vast and unique cultural, educational, artistic, political, diplomatic and financial resources of the city.

“Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up ... into Christ”: Caring through the Stewardship of our Resources

- *To build on the Seminary’s physical and financial resources* and focus on developing our organizational and community life to renew the Seminary and the city.
- *To restore and renovate our facilities* to serve better the educational, formational and residential needs of the Seminary. This will include exploring the sharing of our facilities with other institutions and upgrading our computer technology.
- *To increase our endowment* significantly while containing our operational costs.
- *To foster an organizational and community life* rooted in our Christian values which is more diverse, empowering, productive, participatory, communicative and trusting.

It is our hope and prayer that such a vision will enable us to be faithful to our past and open to the Spirit’s leading for the future in embodying General’s motto from the Gospel according to John: *Sermo Tuus Veritas Est* (Your Word is Truth).

Submitted by the Rt. Rev. Craig B. Anderson, Dean and President