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Moral Development as a Curriculum Emphasis in American Protestant Theological Education

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Abstract

The study was an exploratory investigation of the contribution that graduate seminary curriculum (broadly conceived) makes to the moral development of Protestant ministerial students, as perceived by faculty. Personal interviews were conducted with 24 faculty members from six midwestern Protestant denominational graduate schools of theology. Clusters of faculty responses identified five factors which influence students' moral development: 1. challenging and diverse off-campus field and work experiences; 2. personal example of faculty and close faculty-student relationships; 3. sustaining a growing, devotional relationship with God through chapel attendance, prayer and Bible study; 4. stimulating peer dialogue and structured group experiences; and, 5. exposure to or discussion of moral issues. As identified by the faculty, factors which may hinder students' moral development relate to: (a) trappings of an academic, institutional setting and (b) faculty assumptions about and limited interaction with students. Recommendations are presented for the improvement of theological education.

One of the defining characteristics of a professional is the exercise of autonomy (Moore, 1970). As an aspect of this autonomy, professionals are those who have what sociologist Hughes (1984 [1959]) refers to as a:

... license to do dangerous things . . . I speak, rather, of the license of the doctor to cut and dose, of the priest to play with men's salvation, of the scientist to split atoms; or simply of danger that advice given a person may be wrong, or that work done may be unsuccessful or cause damage. (p. 289)

A greater burden of accountability and decision-making is placed on those in the professions than workers in other vocational endeavours. It is expected that

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professionals complete rigorous training and maintain high ethical standards in light of the potential harm to clients. How do professionals develop such ethical standards? Since formal professional education is one significant prerequisite for professional practice, what role does professional education have in affecting development toward moral maturity?

Introduction

A growing interest in this issue is reflected by investigations of the professional education of physicians (Bickel, 1987), nurses (Felton and Parsons, 1987), teachers (Thoma and Rest, 1987), and lawyers (Willging and Dunn, 1981). At the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry (Minneapolis), a curriculum is being 'designed to help dental students identify, reason about, and adequately resolve ethical problems' (Bebeau, 1985).

The relationship between moral development and religion in general has also received some research attention (reviewed by Getz, 1984) including studies of students from Christian colleges (Shaver, 1985, 1987). Yet, little is known regarding the moral development of those preparing for the Protestant ministry as described below. Before discussing these few studies, a brief introduction to American theological education will be presented.

American theological education

Along with law and medicine, the Protestant religious ministry constituted one of the three oldest learned professions (Moore, 1970). Until the latter half of the nineteenth century, the apprenticeship model was the predominant method of preparing American young people to enter these professions. Students would be apprenticed to a preceptor – a practising professional: minister, lawyer or physician. The actual training would require students to read various divinity, law, or medical textbooks (usually limited to the preceptor's own library), as well as attend the preceptor in his or her practice. The students could not directly work with the parishioners or clients. Students were limited to observing the preceptor and performing various menial errands (Kaufman, 1976; Winkleman, 1976).

Though seminaries emerged in America in the latter half of the eighteenth century, as did the professional schools of law and medicine,¹ little similarity marked the purposes and contexts of these schools. Most of the early medical and law schools were proprietary institutions. During the twentieth century, these professional schools developed associations with universities; the vast majority of seminaries did not. Theological seminaries have always been and continue to be the church's schools and as such are in the service of the church. Consequently, ministerial education is unique among the older professions in that (a) it is highly responsive to its constituency, the church, and (b) it is largely isolated from the mainstream of professional education associated with the university (Brubacher and Willis, 1968, pp.209–10).

A significant precedent for investigating professional education was set in 1910 by Flexner in his report on medical education. This report had such an impact on the reform of medical education that the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, sponsor of the Flexner study, implemented a plan to evaluate professional preparation in other fields (law, 1914 and 1928; engineering, 1918; teaching, 1920; dentistry, 1926). Theological education received only slight notice in 1911 with a few pages of comment in one annual report (Pritchett, 1911, pp. 94–9).

The task of examining seminary education was largely taken up by a group of concerned theological educators. In 1918, the Conference on Theological Education

was organized and began consultation work with various seminaries. This group was the foundation of what was to become the recognized accrediting agency for theological education, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). The association was involved in, or sponsored, the major studies of theological education in this century in 1924, 1934, 1957, 1966 and 1980 (Schuller, Strommen and Brekke, 1980). In addition, a few denominations have conducted studies of their own seminaries (e.g., the Episcopal Church, Pusey and Taylor, 1967).

In the United States, there are approximately 150 Protestant seminaries (the majority of which are denominationally-related) (Jacquet, 1986). The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree, the most common degree programme, typically involves three years of full-time graduate study. The number of faculty at each seminary varies and may range anywhere from 5 to 60.

Seminary faculty are usually organized around four traditional categories or departments: (a) biblical studies (e.g., biblical hebrew and greek, hermeneutics and exegesis of biblical documents in the old and new testaments, introduction to critical issues pertaining to the date, setting and authorship of the documents), (b) dogmatics (e.g., systematic theology, christian ethics, apologetics), (c) historical theology, the study of the history of the Christian church and the development of its doctrines, and (d) practical theology (e.g., homiletics, christian education, pastoral care and counselling and world missions).

Research on protestant seminarians

To date, only four studies offer any data pertaining to the moral development of seminary students.² Darley and Batson (1973) reenacted the parable of the Good Samaritan with 47 seminary students. The better predictor of helping behaviour was the 'hurry' variable (whether students were in a hurry or not) and not the 'message-content of thinking' variable (i.e., preparing an extemporaneous presentation on the parable of the Good Samaritan).³ Smith and Westerhoff (1980) taught a required seminary ethics course over a period of three years (approx. 20 students each year). Each succeeding year, more students had post-test scores in the Stage Five range and a greater percentage of students used theological categories in post-test responses. (Assessments were based on a 50-minute written version of Kohlberg's interview protocol.) Yet, overall, most students tested at the conventional range (Stages Three and Four).

Rest and his colleagues have included seminary students in comparing Defining Issues Test (DIT) scores with various groups. Rest *et al.* (1974) found that 25 'liberal Protestant seminary students' yielded a mean P score (Principled, i.e., Stages Five and Six) of 55.5 on a continuum between the mean P score of 40 college students (50.4) and 15 doctoral students in moral philosophy and political science (65.2). In the study by Lawrence (1979, 1987), 29 ninth-grade students (30.75) and 30 graduate philosophy students (56.78) produced higher P scores than did 16 religious students from 'an extreme fundamentalist theological college' (22.47). Of the 16 religious students, seven were enrolled in the bachelors programme, three were enrolled concurrently in the bachelors and masters programmes, and only six students were actually *graduate* seminarians. The fragmentary findings from these four studies indicate the need for further investigation.

Among a list of recommendations for future research in the review cited above, Getz suggested that studies should 'identify the kinds of religious education that seem to foster moral development and those that seem to hinder it ...' (1984, p.108). The present research offers some preliminary findings on the matter. The study was exploratory in nature investigating what contribution the seminary curriculum (broadly conceived) makes to the moral development of Protestant ministerial students. Previous curriculum studies of seminary education have examined

other aspects (e.g., emphasis on the subject of 'servant leadership', Ferris, 1983; emphasis on the social development of seminarians, Habermas, 1986).

One could approach the study of curriculum from differing viewpoints: with an analysis of curricular documents, from the vantage point of the student who experiences the curriculum, and from the perspective of the faculty member who develops the curriculum and then directs the learning experiences of students.

Since faculty members play a crucial role in the development and dissemination of the curriculum, the study primarily investigated faculty perceptions as a point of initial inquiry. Obtaining subject's descriptions of situations is a legitimate research endeavour when seeking to uncover 'the psychological meanings of such situations' (Giorgi, 1986, p.21) and when attempting to develop preliminary categories for further exploration. Attention was directed at professors' understanding of the nature and process of moral development and moral education, professors' interactions with students regarding matters which may influence students' growth toward moral maturity, and programmatic elements of the seminary intended to influence the moral development of students.

Method

Sample

A total of 17 mid-western protestant denominational seminaries were invited to participate in the study. The denominational affiliation of these 17 seminaries represented 10 of the 12 major American denominational families, as identified by ATS's 'Readiness for Ministry' study (Schuller, *et al.*, 1980, pp.57-8). Six seminaries responded positively to the invitation and participated (representing four of the ten denominational families). The sample included a total of four faculty members from each of the six schools (23 male and one female). An administrative officer (academic dean, vice-president or president) from each seminary was included in the set of four. For three of the schools, the names of faculty members were randomly selected from a faculty roster; in the other three schools, faculty names were recommended by the president. Alternates were selected in four cases when the 'original' faculty member could not participate in the study. The following demographic information was compiled from the sample: the mean age was 53 years and the mean years of full-time teaching was 20 years. Thirteen of the professors had previous full-time professional experience as a minister, ranging from two to 17 years (the mean was nine years), prior to beginning a teaching career.

A corollary purpose of the study was to isolate factors which might be related to important differences in responses. It was assumed that such differences were most apt to be related to two variables: (a) primary discipline of the faculty member and (b) years of full-time ministerial experience. An equal representation of the two general discipline clusters was made from each seminary: two faculty members from the 'classical disciplines' (biblical studies, dogmatics, and church history), and two faculty members from the 'ministry-related disciplines' (practical theology). In the majority of seminaries a greater percentage of the faculty are usually associated with the classical disciplines.

Procedure

A 22-question standardized, open-ended interview schedule was developed to collect data for the larger study.⁴ Responses to seven of these questions are reported in the article (see Appendix A for a listing of these questions). Factors considered in designing the 22 questions included: word choice, question order, varying items and respondent tasks, and providing a personal and concrete reference in most questions (Lortie, 1975; Payne, 1951; Sudman and Bradburn, 1982).⁵

For the purpose of formally testing the interview protocol, interviews conducted at two of the six seminaries were designated as the pilot study. Some minor modifications were made and a final form was developed and used in the four remaining schools. In order to maximize the utility of all 24 interviews, where comparable, pilot study data were folded in and reported in the findings along with data collected using the final form.

From the pilot study, it was deemed essential to supply some information about the subject matter of moral development to provide a common foundation for the interview. Consequently, three pieces of information were presented to the respondent at different points during the first half of the interview: (a) a definition of the moral domain (see Appendix B), (b) a listing and description of five aspects of moral development, based on a review of the literature (see Appendix B), and (c) a sample listing of moral issues (e.g., abortion, war, one's social responsibility).

Personal interviews (averaging 45 to 90 minutes in length) were conducted with 24 faculty members over a period of two months. Handwritten notes were taken and recorded directly on the interview form. In taking notes of comments, attempts were made to be telegraphic but to use words of the respondents. Except in one case, the interview was also recorded on cassette tape, providing a corroboration of handwritten notes. To minimize response effects due to the interviewer, a pattern of standardized interviewer behaviours was developed (Dijkstra and Van der Zouwen, 1982). Care was taken to guarantee anonymity of comments and to use appropriate wording for potentially threatening questions in order to discourage comments solely motivated to please the interviewer, or to present the respondents in a more favourable light.

Data analysis

Handwritten notes and transcribed interview comments were analysed in a manner similar to the procedures identified by Miles and Huberman (1984, a and b): data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. A professor's reply to a question was reduced to a unit or units of response which could then be grouped and compared with other professors' responses to the same question. The intent was to capture in the unit the essential concept which directly answered the question. The process involved bypassing tangential and general remarks and selecting what was germane to the question. One or more response units may result from a professor's comments, depending on the number of distinct concepts mentioned. Similar remarks were incorporated into one unit. A unit of response may be a few words, or a sentence or two - some manageable and meaningful unit of thought.

The initial task involved identifying the essential answer to the interview question. The selection process was initiated during the actual interview with notes that were recorded on the interview form and then later supplemented by listening to recorded interview tapes and reading transcribed interview comments.

All of the professors' response units to the same question were placed in a list. Empirically derived categories were created from thematic clusters. When categories included a large number of comments, further subdivisions became apparent and were identified. The creation of the general clusters (data display) facilitated the process of bringing organization and meaning to the data.

Results

Two major clusters of responses are discussed in this section.⁶ One cluster related to general themes which were perceived as contributing positively to the moral development of seminarians. Another cluster focused on factors

which inhibit progress toward moral maturity. No real differences were evident in faculty comments based on either primary discipline or years of prior pastoral ministry.⁷

Five general themes: promoting moral development

Based on an analysis of responses from five of the most general and broadly opened interview questions (nos. 6, 9, 13, 17, 18) the study identified five overarching themes which faculty perceived as affecting students' moral development. Two of the themes were supported by a majority of the faculty:

- (a) challenging and diverse off-campus field and work experiences and,
- (b) personal example of faculty and close faculty-student relationships.

Three of the themes were supported by a little less than half of the faculty respondents:

- (c) sustaining a growing, devotional relationship with God through chapel attendance, prayer and Bible study,
- (d) stimulating peer dialogue and structured group experiences and
- (e) exposure to and discussion of moral issues.

THEME ONE:

'Challenging and diverse off-campus field and work experiences' (37 responses by 22 professors)

In off-campus contexts (e.g., pastoral or crisis counselling, problems at work, inner city ministries) students are confronted by people from various backgrounds with differing needs and problems, and are forced to make moral decisions. Here, theory is applied, and conceptions and convictions are shaped and adjusted. Field experiences which are competently supervised and evaluated often yield greater learning than just having the experience itself. Some experiences are more challenging than others, and some professors wish that students had more diverse encounters.

THEME TWO:

'Personal example of faculty and close faculty-student relationships' (29 responses by 18 professors)

An important emphasis was placed on situations in which faculty took a personal interest in a student and in which students felt free to approach faculty members on a personal basis. Most of the professors identified their former seminary teachers as significant influences regarding their own moral development when they were seminary students. The professors assume a significant mentoring function – academically, professionally, and personally – in preparing seminarians for their future role. Many of the schools attempt to structure such a relationship through an advisor-advisee system.

THEME THREE:

'Sustaining a growing, devotional relationship with God through chapel attendance, prayer and Bible study' (17 responses by 10 professors)

A number of responses indicated that one's morality is grounded in an intimate, devotional commitment to God. Seminaries do provide a regular formal worship experience for students as one means of fostering and nurturing such an intimacy (in some schools chapel attendance is voluntary and in others it is required). Additional emphasis at some schools is provided through a 'day of prayer' (classes are cancelled to allow for special times of corporate prayer) or the celebration of the Eucharist. Communication with God through prayer and Bible study is manifested in various locations: the classroom, the professor's office, and within informal gatherings of students. This particular theme distinguishes

the seminary from other professional schools: its emphasis and reliance on the supernatural.

THEME FOUR:

'Stimulating peer dialogue and structured group experiences' (16 responses by 10 professors)

Through various experiences together – classes, group assignments, discussions after class – students affect each other's development toward moral maturity. The influence may be intensified when relating to students of different cultural backgrounds. Students should be encouraged to enter into frequent dialogue with classmates.

THEME FIVE:

'Exposure to or discussion of moral issues'⁸ (11 responses by 9 professors)

Many professors commented that students should be able to think critically about the major issues and that seminary should provide a forum to wrestle with complex problems. Responses to interview question seven suggested three main purposes faculty hope to accomplish when raising moral issues in class.

1. Students should be able to think clearly and understand the complexity of moral issues and they should be aware of the various options which one may choose.
2. Students must also be able to identify the relevant biblical principles and universal issues at stake – to be able to separate the cultural from the universal.
3. Finally, students should be encouraged to make a decision – to articulate a position and to commit themselves to act accordingly.

Factors which may hinder the development of moral maturity

Responses based on five interview questions indicated what faculty perceived as factors hindering students' moral development (nos. 7, 9, 13, 14, 18; 45 total responses made by 19 professors). Two general sub-categories emerged from the data.

FACTOR ONE:

'Trappings of an academic, institutional setting' (30 responses by 16 professors)

Faculty stated that some students measure their self-worth in terms of a grade point average (GPA). The pressure of completing requirements, excelling in grades and paying the financial costs of seminary education often prevent students from taking the time to reflect on the more significant issues of life. Typical academic evaluation procedures tend to encourage individual achievement. Grades are assigned to individual students; awards are given to those with the highest GPA. Pressure is placed on the individual student to perform, yet, in the pastorate, it will take joint ventures and cooperative initiatives to carry on the ministry.

Procedures related to giving students feedback on their progress tend to focus primarily on academic criteria and, when attention is given to personal matters, identifying the marginal problem student is usually the main purpose. Little attention is given to helping good students develop to higher levels of morality. When monitoring procedures are more informal, left to the individual faculty advisors, the effectiveness of the system depends on the capability and personal energy of each faculty member and the commitment to develop relationships with students.

Due to the seminary's significant accent on the acquisition of Biblical knowledge, a lesser degree of emphasis is placed on the development of critical thinking

skills. Faculty stated that few courses genuinely challenge students to think for themselves.

FACTOR TWO:

'Faculty assumptions about and limited interaction with students' (13 responses by 9 professors)

A few professors assumed students were already morally mature, especially in moral thinking and moral sensitivity. Thus, a special focus on encouraging student's moral development is not considered necessary. Professors were able to identify and articulate a number of helpful and creative learning experiences which could promote students' moral growth (e.g. faculty modelling, interaction within student groups). Yet, in practice, when attempting to facilitate improvement of students' character faults, most professors tend to employ a pure didactic-cognitive mode (e.g., reminding and exhorting).

A majority of professors remembered their own seminary professors as being the most influential element in moral growth during their days as a seminary student. Yet, due to their own busyness and responsibilities, professors may neglect to seek out-of-class contacts with students.

Discussion

The study did not attempt to identify the relative influence that seminary education provides in the moral life of the student in relation to prior and other concurrent influences (e.g., family background, college education). Seminary education has an impact on the moral development of the student and the purpose of the study was to uncover what kinds of factors would affect or inhibit a seminarian's growth toward moral maturity.

Faculty-student contact beyond the classroom

Though the findings are only preliminary, it is possible to venture a few recommendations for the improvement of protestant theological education. Moral maturity seems to result more from indirect educational interventions, than from direct efforts – i.e., it is more 'caught than taught'. Efforts focused solely on the classroom only limit the potential impact on the life of the seminarian. Some aspects of seminary education must break the typical classroom dependency model of education, especially those efforts geared toward the moral development of seminary students.

A recurring focus in the responses is placed on faculty-student relationships, especially out-of-class contacts (e.g., '... the fact that there were two professors that took a personal interest and I felt that I could go and talk to them at any time and that I would not be intruding' [2128]). One important environmental condition is an appropriate model or example. The seminary professor assumes such a role. Faculty must become more approachable to students to encourage students to solicit faculty counsel and advice. Some students are intimidated by the 'superior' status of faculty in the conventional faculty-student role structure and tend to avoid faculty contact. Thus, faculty must also take the initiative to seek out-of-class contacts with students.

Faculty must scrutinize the model which they present to the students, both in the classroom and beyond. For example, does the faculty member support the importance of chapel attendance through regular attendance? A practice developed by one of the seminaries provided an opportunity for a number of such critical factors to come together in a single context. In lieu of one of the weekly chapel meetings, advisor-advisee groups were scheduled to meet. This group meeting, led by the faculty member, focused on developing close relationships

among students and the faculty leader through spiritual exercises of prayer, bible study and discussions of personal issues and problems. In such a setting, faculty members can set good examples by (a) being a cooperative team member in a group (e.g., guiding and contributing to a discussion vs. presenting a lecture); (b) giving testimony to the importance of a personal relationship with God and the study of His Word; and (c) explaining how ministry issues and problems were resolved by the faculty member when he or she served in the pastoral ministry (i.e., relating theory to practice). This is one way to structure out-of-class experiences which may have significant effects on the lives of students.

The learning process

Emphasis in responses was also placed on experiential learning (e.g. '... working with people in the church, the field education internships where they have to deal with real issues – a deacon's divorce, injustice in the city' [6526]). The art and skill of the professional are honed in the school of experience. In the past, the 'hands on' aspect of training was postponed to the first years of professional practice following graduation. A significant trend in professional education has been to include a greater experiential component within the years of schooling, both through supervised field experiences and simulation exercises in the classroom. Due to its isolation from the university setting, the seminary is often one of the last professional schools to implement significant changes in its curriculum. Administrators must make a diligent effort to be informed of important trends in professional education and must be willing to assume the difficult role of the change agent. Through challenging and diverse experiences, whether in the field or in the classroom, seminarians are compelled to make decisions and commit themselves to a course of action. Such decisions and actions are the essential building blocks of moral character.

Seminary professors must come to a greater understanding of the complex processes of human learning, especially in the cognitive realm. The foundation of learning – knowing the facts – is well laid in seminary. Yet, if all of learning is viewed as purely a 'dump truck' approach, seminarians will never be challenged to comprehend and critique concepts at deeper or higher levels of learning (as suggested by Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain). Moral reasoning, though not the only component, plays a significant part in moral development. Faculty must encourage critical thinking among seminarians, especially as it relates to the complicated factors of a moral dilemma. Guided group discussions among peers is one means of fostering dialogue at deeper levels.

Priorities of the seminary student

Relieving extraneous institutional pressures may help to remove roadblocks which stand in the way of the earnest student (e.g., '... students put too much stock in grades' [1515]; '... the high number of required hours and the high [financial] cost of seminary education combine to make it very difficult for the student to take the time to reflect spiritually and morally' [4517]). For example, faculty should assess the purpose of student awards and the criteria used to select recipients. What is being honoured? Is too great an emphasis placed on a student's GPA? Are other factors better predictors of excellence in ministerial practice? Or, what is the purpose of computing a GPA? What do letter or number grades really reflect? Should grades be based on more diverse assessments, including written opinions of student progress by faculty? Should some evaluations be based on cooperative rather than individual, competitive efforts?

What part does the seminarian's academic workload and homework assignments play in robbing precious time to reflect upon the serious issues of

life (besides robbing precious sleep)? Is the curriculum geared more to the single student of the past or to the contemporary seminarian who often comes with spouse and children? What assistance should seminaries and churches offer seminarians to help finance this important educational experience? Most seminarians must divide their time and attention between studies, family, work and church ministry.

When pressures mount, seminarians are tempted to seek immoral short-cuts (e.g., neglect of physical health or family responsibilities or legitimate ministry opportunities to others or honest income tax reporting). Lifestyle patterns (both good and bad) developed during seminary days often become the norm following graduation. Consequently, seminary curriculum should be designed with a holistic view of the student's present responsibilities and with a view that, in many ways, seminary life *is* life, not just preparation for life.

Development toward moral maturity is encouraged and facilitated in contexts which manifest the appropriate combination of factors. The study has suggested at least five general themes which may influence the moral development of ministerial students. In addition, attention was focused on some factors which may negatively affect moral development.

Due to the ever present socialization process, the students' moral maturity is continually being affected by aspects of seminary education. Theological educators (and other professional educators) may wish to move toward a more proactive posture of deliberate educational planning regarding the moral development of students. Investigations of the moral development of seminary students may also have much relevance for the moral education of other professional students.

Many questions remain. To what degree does the seminary actually facilitate student development toward moral maturity? Can the seminary seriously affect the moral maturity of students as compared to pre-seminary education and experiences? When positive outcomes occur during seminary, to what extent are these results due to intentional, institutional planning as opposed to fortuitous (or providential) influences, such as the individual efforts of some faculty or students? Future studies will help refine the present findings and could suggest further insights regarding the moral education of seminary students.

Appendix A

Interview questions cited in the article

INTERVIEW QUESTION 6

Either as a part of their coursework, or as some part of their seminary experience, students are often required to do certain activities or projects which may contribute to their own moral growth. Would you happen to remember which particular activities or experiences, either in or out of the classroom, students have reported as being the most helpful to their own moral growth?

INTERVIEW QUESTION 7

Let's look more closely at the aspect of moral thinking. One particular classroom activity which is useful here is the discussion of moral issues. (Give list of moral issues.) For example, here is one list of some of the moral issues being discussed in different seminaries.

When you raise moral issues in the classroom, what is your main purpose? What do you primarily hope to accomplish?

INTERVIEW QUESTION 9

Let's look at the aspect of moral sensitivity. What do you think is the most effective way to help students become more mature in their moral sensitivity?

INTERVIEW QUESTION 13

Part A

In your exposure to the seminary students over the past few years, have you noticed any common character faults, attitudes, or problems among the students which particularly concern you? If so, could you name a few?

Part B

(Pick one) What do you think the seminary can specifically do to help deal with this?

INTERVIEW QUESTION 14

In your opinion, are there any aspects of the seminary curriculum or programme which may inadvertently contribute to hindering the student's growth toward moral maturity?

INTERVIEW QUESTION 17

Now, please think back to your own experience of seminary as a student. What proved to be the most influential in encouraging your moral maturity?

INTERVIEW QUESTION 18

If you, yourself, could change *one* thing about the way the seminary currently influences students' growth toward moral maturity, what would that be?

Appendix B

Definition of the moral domain

The 'moral domain' relates to how one ought to treat others and the degree to which one takes into consideration how one's actions will affect the welfare of others.

Five aspects of moral development

(The definition was framed for a religious audience.)

MORAL KNOWLEDGE

The information and comprehension one has of

- (a) Biblical precepts and moral principles as well as
- (b) specific moral issues.

MORAL THINKING

The capability to analyse the relevant factors of a moral issue or situation, and to make a decision or judgement based on some logical rationale.

MORAL SENSITIVITY

The capability to empathize with others concerning their needs and rights with a sense of compassion, justice, and responsibility; a sensitivity to one's conscience and the Holy Spirit.

PERSONAL VALUES

The particular moral convictions, beliefs, and responsibilities to which one is committed by conscious choice or those values adhered to by unconscious practice.

WILL POWER

The resolve and capability to act on one's moral convictions in the face of countervailing forces; the capability to resist temptations.

Notes

1. The first medical college was established in Philadelphia in 1765 (Kaufman, 1976) and the first law school was established either in 1782 or 1784 in Litchfield, Connecticut (Reed, 1928). The first graduate seminary was established in New York City in 1784 (Winkelman, 1976, p.68).
2. Two other studies (Grant, 1975; Lindscoog, 1973) yielded insignificant or inconclusive outcomes.
3. Greenwald (1975) reanalyzed the data and suggested that further study was warranted before a conclusion could be drawn regarding the 'message variable'.
4. This study was part of a larger dissertation study investigating curricular aspects of seminary education. ISSLER, K. (1985). 'Moral development as a component of the education of Protestant ministers', *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 45, 3533-A.
5. Some interview questions were adapted from previous studies: Bussis, Chittendon and Amarel, 1976; Ferris, 1983; Lortie, 1975; Lubomudrov, 1982; Prawat, 1979; Renaud, 1979.
6. A set of eight tables displaying representative comments is available from the first author c/o Western Seminary, 5511 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland, OR 97215, USA.
7. One minor difference related to 'primary discipline' did surface. Only ten professors (of 21) were familiar with Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Of the ten professors, eight were associated with the ministry-related disciplines and just two with the classical disciplines.
8. Interview question no. 7 specifically identified the discussion of moral issues as a classroom learning activity and provided a sample list of moral issues. This direct suggestion may have inadvertently influenced some professors to mention this activity when answering interview questions nos. 13, 17, and 18 which are discussed in this section.

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