



Association for Theological Education Newsletter

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Biennial Consultation in Boston January 17-21, 2001

The 26th ATFE Biennial Consultation will be held January 17-21 at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge, MA.

“Revolution: Changing Church and Theological Education” is the

Consultation theme. Keynote Speakers are Rebecca Chopp and Harvey Cox. Dr. Chopp is Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at Emory University. She is also Vice-President of the American Academy of Religion and chair of the Women in Leadership Project of the American Theological Society. She is widely published in the fields of women’s studies, Christian theology, and the role of religion in American public life. Dr. Cox is Thomas Professor of Divinity at Harvard University. His interests focus on the interaction of religion, politics, and culture; Christianity in the Third World, especially Latin America; and new religious movements.. His book *The Secular City* has sold nearly one million copies in eleven languages.

A variety of clinics, seminars, workshops, working groups, and immersion experiences will appeal to seasoned and entering field educators. New this year is a special



Historic Boston is Biennial Consultation site

“track” for supervisors from congregations and other ministry settings.

The registration fee of \$180 includes program events, three continental breakfasts, two lunches, and banquet. A dramatic presentation of the Gospel of Mark is an optional evening event. Early-bird registrants (before Nov. 1) will receive a free ticket to this performance.

A full listing of events and registration information can be found in the Biennial brochure mailed to all ATFE members and on the ATFE website: www.atfe.org.

Continuity and Change: ATS Theme

President Bob O’Gorman represented ATFE at the biennial Association for Theological Education (ATS) meeting in Toronto, June 16-20. “The most exciting session for me,” reports O’Gorman “was a workshop on ‘Leading Schools to Fulfill the Educational Mission’ led by Brian McDermott, SJ and Davis Tiede.” Tiede pointed to the new ATS mission statement approved during the meeting: “...to promote the improvement and enhancement of theological schools to the benefit of communities of faith and the broader public.” O’Gorman notes the key point in the new statement is “the focus on ‘communities of faith’ rather than the theological disciplines or the ministerial leadership. Clearly

‘context’ is the key word! ATS as a body clearly has chosen the communities we serve as the starting point in these discussions for curriculum and teaching.”

O’Gorman also reports that “The real ‘buzz’ at the meeting was the new forms of technological education.” Major portions of the business meeting concerned re-development of Standard 10: Multiple Locations and Distance Education, which includes courses on the Internet.

In its first meeting of the new millennium, ATS plenary speakers addressed past (Bill Leonard and Clyde Crews), present (Bob Abernethy), and future (Dan Aleshire). Videotapes can be ordered from ATS in Pittsburgh.

Beyond Fear to Confidence: Developing Boundaries as a Skill and Norm in Ministry

Donald R. McCrabb, D. Min.

Boundary violations within church and society prompt ministers to take a critical look at their pastoral practice. Borrowing insights from pastoral counseling, I identify twelve boundaries in ministry, describe a skill, call for a norm and conclude with implications for ministerial formation.

A boundary, in common usage, evokes the spatial image of a line; it sets a limit. When applied to people, it outlines the self within a relationship. The helping professions have identified key boundaries which, when intentionally set and kept, become a skill. Place, the duration of the session, payment, confidentiality, and termination procedures are boundaries counselors strictly adhere to so the focus of the relationship is therapeutic. (Thomas B. Drummond, *The Ministerial Counseling Role—Guidelines for Ethical Behavior*, Carson City: The Plains Groups, Inc., 1996.)

Setting a boundary in ministry establishes the relationship as ministerial; there is a theological purpose and a public promise governed by faith in Jesus Christ. Ministers, as representatives of the church, must be clear about their identity and objectives. The first step is the identification and setting of a boundary. Poor boundary setting confuses the relationship, obscures the ministerial objective, and dilutes ministerial identity. When is a boundary violated: when the outcome diminishes the parishioner or the mission of the church. Essential boundaries in ministry include:

I. Practical Boundaries in Ministry

A. Location: Ministers define the place(s) where they work, take command of their service, express their identity, and send a clear message to the people they serve.

B. Touch: Ministers rely on the con-

text to help them decide how to touch their parishioners. Holding someone's hand may be comforting in a hospital but confusing in a counseling session.

C. Time: Defining a beginning and ending time focuses everyone's attention on the task at hand.

II. Personal Boundaries in Ministry

A. Personality: The skilled minister claims gifts and limitations freely; sharing one's gifts and relying on others to help him or her manage their limitations.

B. Emotions: The skilled minister is clear about his or her feelings; naming another's feelings encourages self acceptance and personal re-

sponsibility.

C. Sexuality: Each minister celebrates and struggles with their sexuality within the context of their vocation giving ministry energy, generosity, and respectability.

III. Interpersonal Boundaries

A. Language: Speech can instruct, inspire, and illuminate. A skilled minister knows his or her audience, communicates clearly, and verifies what is heard.

B. Position: It defines the scope of a person's institutional authority and establishes contractual parameters between the minister and the parishioner.

C. Social: This is a dual role in which the minister has a social as well as pastoral relationship. Entering into a dual role begins to confuse the relationship and complicates the ministerial objective.

IV. Religious Boundaries in Ministry

A. Community: The church confers the authority to serve in its name, provides the context for ministry and holds the minister accountable.

B. Spirituality: The skilled minister draws from his or her own spiritual

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ATFE

Steering Committee

Robert T. O'Gorman, Chairperson
Institute of Pastoral Studies
6525 North Sheridan Road
Chicago, IL 60626
773-508-2435 rogorma@luc.edu

Belva Brown Jordan, Vice-Chair
Harvard Divinity School
45 Francis Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
617/496-6569
Belva_Jordan@harvard.edu

Catherine Barnsley, Secretary
St. Stephen's/St. Andrew's Colleges
8810 - 112 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2J6
800/661-4956
catherine.barnsley@usask.ca

Richard G. Cunningham, Treasurer
School of Theology and Ministry
Seattle University
900 Broadway
Seattle, WA 98122-4340
206/296-2101 drdick@seattleu.edu

Sally T. Gomez-Kelly, At Large
Oblate School of Theology
285 Oblate Drive
San Antonio, TX 78216
210/341-1366, ext. 224
sallyt@ost.edu

Michael P. Green, At Large
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
2965 Half Day Road
Deerfield, IL 60015
847/317-8031 mgreen@trin.edu

Dudley C. Rose
Local Arrangements
Harvard Divinity School
45 Francis Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
617/496-1600
Dudley_Rose@harvard.edu

Sue Zabel, Communications
Wesley Theological Seminary
4500 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20016
202/885-8646
szabel@wesleysem.edu

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Developing boundaries. . .

life in an open and genuine way which respects the spiritual history of another.

C. Vocation: Understanding and affirming each other's vocation is key to creating mutually enriching partnerships among clergy, religious and the laity.

Boundary setting, as a skill, requires an ability to identify the boundary, set it in the relationship, and hold it within the fluid context of community. As a norm, the minister must be intentional about identifying a boundary, prudent in setting it, and courageous in holding it.

Ministers use theological reflection to develop their knowledge and skills. Once an experience is described, one method (developed by Robert Kinast in *Let the Ministry Teach—A Guide to Theological Reflection*, Liturgical Press, 1996) calls for an analysis. Analysis could include a scan of boundaries. Supervision and peer groups should be two safe places for students to explore boundaries. The ability to call a fellow minister to a higher standard in a loving and supportive manner is the best way to encourage excellence in ministry and prevent boundary violations. This approach to boundaries builds on an ethic for pastoral ministry and underscores the quality of care a disciple of Jesus is called to provide on behalf of the church in service to the reign of God.

Donald R. McCrabb, D.Min., is Acting Director of Pastoral Field Education Dominican House of Studies, Washington DC.

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Participants in Consultation on Teaching (left to right): Mickey Corso, Bob O'Gorman, Randy Nelson, Mick Smith, Jeffrey Mahan, Sue Zabel, Lynn Rhodes, Marilyn Nelson, Joanne Lindstrom, Michael Green, Lucinda Huffaker (Wabash Center), Charlotte McDaniel, Kent Easton, Michael Dash, Jody Clarke, Catherine Barnsley

Consultation on Teaching Stimulates Conversation About Contextualization of Curriculum

The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) is considering supporting further dialogue about "Contextualization, Colleagues, and Curriculum: How should field educators seek to collaborate with seminary colleagues in order to advance contextualization in the seminary's approach to theological education." This question emerged from ATFE's Consultation on Teaching in Theological Field Education held January 6-9, 2000 in Nashville, TN.

The consultation was funded by a grant from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion. ATFE convened Field Educators from fifteen ATS schools across the U.S. and Canada to explore paradigms and methods of teaching, how Field Educators can sharpen the focus of their identity, and the impact of their teaching in the theological curriculum.

Additional themes addressed at the consultation include: identity of field educator as "director" and "teacher," theological reflection as primary teaching method, and field education as a discipline.

Categorization of the field educator as administrative director and teacher differ among theological schools. In some schools, the field

educator is a named, tenure-track professor. In others, they are considered coordinators or managers of the various components of field education experiences. Consultation participants concurred that the distinction between director and teacher is a false dichotomy—every aspect of their work serves the learning objectives of the field education program.

Participants agreed that theological reflection is a primary method of teaching in field education. Action/reflection learning is central both as a means for enhancing ministerial formation and a skill that will enhance students' life-long learning.

Currently there is no body of literature, no journals, and no single academic department that constitutes Field Education. In general, there seems to be widespread support for the educational importance of field education among theological school colleagues but little structural support. Field educators necessarily are generalists and multidisciplinary.

These issues will be addressed at the 2001 ATFE Biennial Consultation and proposed follow-up gatherings. For a copy of the full report to the Wabash Center, contact ATFE President Bob O'Gorman.

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ATFE Journal \$5.00 + Shipping and Handling each

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Caucus News



Caucus Meetings

Canadian Caucus will meet for breakfast during the 2001 Biennial on Thursday, January 18.

PTFE will meet during the Biennial at 4pm, Wednesday, January 17. The group will continue to meet Sunday-Tuesday, January 21-23 (Arrangements TBA). PTFE is in the final stages of a two-year research project on "Legal Issues for Field Education." The project is funded through grants from ATFE and the Wabash Center. The results will be published in a manual that will be available at the Biennial Consultation. Susan Fox, Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, is the project director.

Lutheran Field Educators will meet in Chicago on December 16. Those involved in the Horizon Internship Program met in Chicago August 21-22 to discuss national and international internships. During the 2001 Biennial, there will be two meetings: all Lutheran Field Educators will meet for supper on Friday, January 19, 5-7pm; those from Chicago will meet for supper on Thursday, January 18, 5-7pm.

United Methodist Caucus will meet during the 2001 Biennial at 4pm on Wednesday, January 17.

Please contact Bob O'Gorman (rogorma@luc.edu) with names of persons who will retire in 2000 or 2001.

Caucus Contacts

Send Caucus articles, news, or meeting information to Sue Zabel, Communications Coordinator (szabel@wesleysem.edu).

Canadian Caucus
Abigail Johnson
Emmanuel College
75 Queen's Park Crescent
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1K7
416/585-4548
Abigail.johnson@utoronto.ca

Catholic ATFE (CATFE)
Father Robert Harris
Le Grand Seminary de Montreal
2065 Sherbrooke West
Montreal, Quebec H3H 1G6
514/935-1169, ext 23
info@gsdm.qc.ca

Disciples Contact
Mick Smith
Christian Theological Seminary
1000 West 42nd Street
Indianapolis, IN
msmith@cts.edu

Evangelical ATFE (EATFE)
Michael P. Green
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
2065 Half Day Road
Deerfield, IL 60015
847/317-8141
FAX 847/317-8141
Mgreen@trin.edu

Lutheran Field Educators
Connie Kleingartner
Lutheran School of Theology
1100 East 55th Street
Chicago, IL 60615
773/256-0747
FAX 773/256-0782
Ckleinga@lstc.edu

Presbyterian Field Educators (PTFE)
Lee Carroll
Columbia Theological Seminary
701 Columbia Drive
Decatur, GA 30031
404/687-4518
CarrollL@CTSnet.edu

United Methodist Caucus
Lisa Withrow
Methodist Theological School in Ohio
3081 Columbus Pike, Box 8004
Delaware, OH 43015
740/362-3343
FAX 740/362-3381
Lwithrow@mtso.edu

Field Ed Resource Still Available

Copies of the classic *Supervision and Education—Formation for Ministry* by the late George Hunter are available from Elizabeth Hunter Lavalley, eh-lavalley@prodigy.net, 1273 Bible Hill Road, Francestown, NH 03042-3328. Cost is \$10 plus \$4 mailing. George Hunter is a former chair of ATFE and was Director of Field Education at Episcopal Divinity School until his retirement.

ASSOCIATION FOR THEOLOGICAL FIELD EDUCATION
c/o Wesley Theological Seminary
4500 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC USA 20016-5690

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Historic Boston Site of Biennial

The Royal Sonesta Hotel is site for the 2001 ATFE Biennial Consultation on Field Education. Standing along the Charles River, the Royal Sonesta offers sweeping Boston views, magnificent accommodations, choice dining, and a luxurious health spa. The hotel's ideal location places guests in the midst of the area's finest shops, museums, historic sites, and restaurants. Just three miles from Logan International Airport, the hotel is minutes from downtown Boston, with easy access to the historic waterfront, Faneuil Hall, and the Freedom Trail. It is directly across the street from the city's newest waterfront shopping area, the CambridgeSide Galleria, and next door



Meeting rooms at the Royal Sonesta Hotel will provide comfortable space to meet colleagues.

to the Museum of Science.

On their free afternoon, participants may want to visit the Museum of African American History, USS Constitution (Old Ironsides), the Museum of Fine Arts, New England Aquarium, Harvard Square, or one of the many other Boston attractions.

The Royal Sonesta is a short walk to the "T" (subway). A complimentary hotel shuttle provides transportation to some of the city's many attractions.

The special room rate for one or two people is \$119 per night. Check ATFE website (atfe.org) or Consultation brochure for reservation information.

Renew ATFE Membership Now!

Membership dues cover the two-year period between Biennial Consultations.

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Harvard Divinity School
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Cambridge, MA 02138

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