

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE  
ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**  
adopted by the Eighth General Synod

June 29, 1971

***Introduction***

The Committee on Theological Education, authorized by and made directly responsible to the Seventh General Synod of the United Church of Christ, begins this report with an expression of deep gratitude for the dedicated work of those whose efforts have preceded our own. We remember here the 1961 Advisory Committee on the Seminaries and the Church, the 1965 Study Commission on Theological Education, and the 1967 Temporary Commission on Theological Education, whose recommendations led to the establishment of the Committee on Theological Education in 1969. Therefore, our work builds on nearly a decade of research and recommendation.

The report of the Temporary Commission on Theological Education to the Seventh General Synod set the tone for our Committee, and we find ourselves basically in agreement with the perspectives presented in that report. Our task is to implement and complement those perspectives in ways that do justice to succeeding historical changes and that assist theological education to perform a genuine ministry in today's world. It is from this standpoint that the Committee has approached its task and makes this report to the Eighth General Synod.

***I. The Work of the Committee***

**A. Initial Task**

As a new committee, the Committee on Theological Education had the initial task of understanding its responsibilities, identifying current problems, and defining its goals. This was essential to build a base for the long-range work of the Committee. It involved a study of the past and present relationships of the seminaries in the United Church of Christ and included a detailed look at the composition of the faculties, student bodies, and graduates of the thirteen schools related to the United Church of Christ as members of the Seminary Section of the Council for Higher Education. These thirteen institutions are: Andover Newton Theological School, Bangor Theological Seminary, The Chicago Theological Seminary, Eden Theological Seminary, Hartford Seminary Foundation, Harvard University Divinity School, Howard University School of Religion, Lancaster Theological Seminary, Pacific School of Religion, Union Theological Seminary, United Seminary of the Twin Cities, Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Yale University Divinity School.

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As an outgrowth of this study the Committee identified seven institutions as having a particular relationship to the United Church of Christ, defined in terms of major number of students educated for United Church of Christ ministry, especially close historic ties, and more critical financial need. The seven institutions are: Andover Newton Theological School, Bangor Theological Seminary, The Chicago Theological Seminary, Eden Theological Seminary, Lancaster Theological Seminary, Pacific School of Religion and United Seminary of the Twin Cities.

### B. Subcommittees

To facilitate its work the Committee organized two continuing subcommittees: (1) a Subcommittee on Style of Ministry, and (2) a Subcommittee to Develop a Formula of Support.

The Subcommittee on Style addressed such questions as: What will the world be like in the 1970's? What will be the shape of the Church in this decade? What will be the needs of the Church? What is the role of the seminary as servant within the body of Christ? How can seminaries best equip and strengthen the Church for its task. As part of its task the subcommittee prepared drafts of a working paper for the Committee that led to Part II of this report below.

The Subcommittee to Develop a Formula of Support established objective criteria to assess the output of seminaries related to the United Church of Christ, e.g., the number of graduates ordained as ministers of the United Church of Christ. In this the Committee sought to respond to the Seventh General Synod's directive, that the Committee encourage the professional training of ministers for service in both the Church and the world.

### C. Allocation of Financial Support

The Committee recognizes the continuing obligation to maintain the national support level promised to three seminaries (Eden, Lancaster, United) through 1971. It also recognizes that *Our Christian World Mission* has not met expectations and that we have not been able to give adequate support to theological education. In fact, the real value of support has continuously eroded with price increases and either constant or declining levels of support.

As a result, the 1970 Payment Schedule of \$332,000 (below the directive of the Seventh General Synod to allocate \$350,000 to the Committee on Theological Education) left only \$28,000 to allocate to the four other seminaries with close ties to the United Church of Christ, these four not having been included in the ten-year support agreement. For 1971, with a reduction in the allocation to the Committee from the \$400,000 proposed by the Seventh General Synod to \$350,000, the Committee has

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been forced once again to curtail its support of theological education and of the seminaries.

The Committee has prepared tentative allocation guidelines for 1972 and subsequent years. These visualize denominational support at higher than current levels. The Committee visualizes that changes will be made from the 1971 allocations. Emphasis will be placed on the way the seminaries meet the various program and leadership needs of the United Church of Christ in its ministry.

### D. Special Projects

In co-operation with the Council for Church and Ministry, the Committee recognizes the critical need for professional leadership in churches in communities of racial and/or socio-economic transition. To address this need the Committee provided a grant of \$10,000 to Howard University School of Religion (one of the thirteen schools with a historic relationship to the United Church of Christ) and a grant of \$15,000 to establish a program to train clerical and lay leaders for ministry in churches in communities in transition. The allocation to Howard University School of Religion is for work-study grants to students whose field placement will be in congregations or projects related to the United Church of Christ. The program to train leadership for churches in communities in transition will be established through the Council for Church and Ministry.

### E. Summary of Allocations

A summary of seminary support and special grants for 1970 and 1971 follows below:

1970	
Eden Theological Seminary	\$117,146
Lancaster Theological Seminary	108,393
United Theological Seminary	56,493
Bangor Theological Seminary	12,000
Chicago Theological Seminary	6,000
Andover Newton Theological School	6,000
Pacific School of Religion	4,000
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	\$310,032
1971	
Howard University School of Religion grant	\$ 10,000
Andover Newton Theological School	23,616
Bangor Theological Seminary	18,893
Chicago Theological Seminary	16,531
Eden Theological Seminary	112,460
Lancaster Theological Seminary	104,057
Pacific School of Religion	3,840
United Theological Seminary	54,240
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	\$333,637

## ***II. Some Perspectives on Theological Education in the United Church of Christ***

### **A. Theological Education: A Definition and Delineation**

Theological education *in the larger sense* is that ministry which seeks to enable every member of the Church to receive and understand the gospel of Jesus Christ and to participate in God's mission to personal and social life. It is the "out-leading" (*e-ducere*) of a "God-understanding" (*theos-logos*) that enables people to exercise their full personhood as God's creatures and to minister both individually and corporately as God's "servants in the service of men."

However, the Committee is charged with a responsibility that centers on theological education *in the narrower sense*, i.e., as it relates to theological seminaries and the preparation of a professional clergy; yet we need always to remember that it is precisely for the sake of the larger sense that the narrower exists. Among the Committee's specific responsibilities are: (1) the continuing exploration and implementation of what theological education is to be, as related to the United Church of Christ; (2) a concern for making theological education highly visible to the denomination in ways that will deepen understanding and encourage enthusiastic interest and support; (3) the formation of recommendations pertaining to theological education to the General Synod; and (4) the implementation of policy decisions adopted by the General Synod, including the allocation of funds for the support of specific institutions and projects.

But the Committee is challenged not just to discover new programs to fit into old structures. Rather, to enhance the total ministry of the Church it is to be at the forefront in exploring and cultivating what may be the needed new styles of professional ministry and the correspondingly needed new styles in theological education. In a time of world upheaval and rapid social change, when nearly all institutions in our society are in crisis, theological education needs to foster greater professional competency, participate in institutional and denominational reform, and create the structures necessary to minister effectively to the needs of personal and social life today.

### **B. Seminaries: A Responsibility of the Denomination**

Given present church structures, though new structures may be evolving, the ministry of theological education is a *direct responsibility of the United Church of Christ as a denomination*, as well as of its Instrumentalities, Conferences, Associations, and local congregations. To use a Biblical metaphor, theological education is an essential member of the body of Christ, and thus the concern for a co-ordination of relationships and support among church structures and UCC-related

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seminaries is part of the responsibility given to the Committee by the General Synod.

Denominational responsibility for theological education does not mean either a sectarian or parochial approach. Rather, it means giving an emphasis to ecumenical co-operation with other denominations and educational institutions that has full denominational support. It means denominational encouragement of seminaries to take the lead in such co-operative endeavors as clusters of schools, interdenominational projects, and reciprocity among educational institutions.

This will involve the co-operation and/or consolidation of UCC-related seminaries among themselves, as well as with other seminaries and/or graduate professional schools. The prime motivation is a concern for a more effective and efficient ministry in this and the ensuing decades of the twentieth century. Therefore, it is of major importance that seminaries, while transcending denominational and institutional boundaries, receive enthusiastic denominational encouragement and support.

### C. Seminaries: A Ministry to the Denomination

Assuming that the major task of seminaries as members of the body of Christ is to help equip the whole body for ministry, the United Church of Christ encourages the seminaries to emphasize an educational style that develops *working models for ministry* in congregations, as well as in other forms of ministry in today's society. This means directing a proper concern for academic excellence toward professional competence in the practice of ministry.

This need for working models may involve *a radical incorporation of practicing clergy and lay people* into the process of seminary education itself. Here we do not mean primarily continuing education for ministers or lay schools of theology, though these are a valid concern in themselves. We mean involving clergy and lay people at the center of the seminary curriculae and letting their concerns and questions contribute directly to the process of developing models for ministry. This could involve a lively interaction between churches and seminaries of mutual benefit to both and beyond what happens in most field education programs. Further, such a process could facilitate in lay people a far greater understanding of theological education and foster in ordained ministers a greater sense of the seminaries' concern for them and their ministries.

To enhance the ministry of the whole "body," seminaries also need to involve *minority groups and women* far more extensively, not only as students but in positions on faculties, administrations, and governing bodies. Here the seminaries have a responsibility to take the lead in breaking old patterns that have impaired the full participation and essential contribution which such persons have to make, both in the

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process of theological education and in the Church's total ministry.

The Committee has as an important part of its task the encouragement and support of new models and methods within the seminaries, as well as in special projects, that can enhance the ministry of theological education in and beyond the United Church of Christ.

### **D. The Congregations: A New Look at Theological Education**

The separation of many congregations from any significant encounter with seminaries leads to a sense of the seminaries' remoteness from the local church and to a widespread lack of understanding about theological education. For many people, rather than seeing the seminaries as an integral and indispensable member of the functioning body of Christ, they become an optional benevolence item in the mission expenditures of the congregation. This same understanding or misunderstanding may pertain also in part to Instrumentalities, Conferences, and Associations, who see theological education in competition with other items in the mission budget.

What is needed is a new look at theological education that will see it, *not as a benevolence option but as an investment* in that part of the "body" which influences the functioning of every other part. Therefore, we strongly encourage local congregations to see theological education in the same budget category as their own church school or adult education programs, not in the category of a benevolence. This would express explicitly an understanding of theological education as an essential part of the congregation's total educational responsibility.

Recognizing with deep appreciation the significant support that churches and Conferences already are contributing, we call upon all Instrumentalities, Conferences, Associations, and local congregations to adopt this new look and in their combined efforts to implement this understanding of theological education in their informational programs and financial allocations.

### **E. Theological Education: A Need for Coordination**

In the context of ecumenical co-operation and of working relationships with other educational institutions and community agencies, there is a need to encourage the careful co-ordination of efforts among UCC-related seminaries, as well as with other seminaries, schools, and agencies in each local situation. The purpose for such co-ordination is to create for theological education the most enriching contexts possible and to avoid the inefficient use and duplication of human and financial resources.

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This means a very realistic look at the present settings of UCC-related seminaries, the continuing exploration of possible consolidation of some UCC-related seminaries with one another or with seminaries related to other denominations, and the enhancement of co-operative relationships with other educational institutions. This concern for co-ordination is one way the General Synod through the Committee on Theological Education can give assistance to the seminaries. It may be able to provide an overall strategy and structure for UCC-related theological education in the ecumenical context of conversation and co-operation with other seminaries and with the representatives of other denominations.

### *III. Recommendations to the General Synod*

The Committee on Theological Education hereby recommends the following action by the General Synod:

*Be It Resolved*, That the Eighth General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

1. Approves the report of the Committee on Theological Education.

2. Affirms the task of theological education as a direct responsibility of all members of the United Church of Christ but asserts the role of the General Synod in creating a national strategy through the Committee on Theological Education.

3. Affirms its conviction that theological education is an investment in the present and future health of the Church, rather than another "good cause" for benevolence, and that it should be so regarded by all parts of the Church. To this end the General Synod approves the proposed budgetary appropriation of \$450,000 for each year in the biennium, 1972-73, and directs the Executive Council in projecting plans for the future financing of the programs of the United Church of Christ to place a high priority on the need for increased support for theological education.

4. Recognizes that the responsibility for theological education includes participation by the General Synod, its Instrumentalities, Conferences, Associations, and local churches in programs of theological education for both clergy and laity, such programs to involve the seminaries and other agencies and their financial undergirding.

5. Commends the increasing emphasis in UCC-related seminaries on educational style that develops working models for ministry in local congregations and in other forms of ministry, that incorporates practicing clergy and lay people directly in the educational process, and that makes a concerted effort to increase the participation of minority groups and women both as students and in positions on faculties, administrations, and governing bodies.

Members of the Committee, in addition to the Chairman, are Mrs. Jack E. Berger, Mrs. Vallen L. Emery, Nathanael M.

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Guptill, William W. Hambleton, Paul L. Hammer, Wesley A. Hotchkiss, Robert T. Fauth, Melvin R. Janssen, Edward F. Manthei, Ernst P. Press, G. Wesley Raney III, Howard E. Spragg, Frederick R. Trost, and Harold H. Wilke; staff: Joseph H. Evans.

A. KNIGHTON STANLEY, *Chairman*

(71-GS-57)