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# Its Graduates Speak; the Seminary Listens

By RONALD L. JOHNSTONE

**H**ow well does Concordia Seminary train its students for subsequent service in the church? This is the central question being asked continually by Concordia Seminary of itself; this is also the focusing question of a study just completed by the Concordia Seminary Research Center. The following pages report in part the results of this study of training effectiveness.

What we shall be concerned with, then, is a process of evaluation — evaluation of the success of an organization as a producing unit. Normally a producing organization can evaluate its success in fairly specific terms, particularly when the item produced is an artifact or tangible device of some kind. Thus we may hear such assertions of effectiveness or quality as follows: "Our battery will start a 300-h.p. engine 961 times at -40 degrees before balking." "Our box will withstand 300 pounds of surface pressure before collapse." "Our detergent yields a 37 percent profit." "Our sales equal those of all other companies combined." And so on. These are empirical answers in the relatively unambiguous language of numbers, pounds, proportions, and the like.

But how does an educational institution measure its effectiveness? For one thing, the manner of evaluating will be dictated largely by the goals one has set out to accomplish and how one has set up processes toward their accomplishment. Thus one institution may judge itself effective if 50 percent of its graduates go on for advanced degrees and specialized graduate training. Another may check on the pro-

portion of its graduates who have attained mention in *Who's Who* after 30 years in their chosen field. Still another may judge itself on the basis of the quality of faculty it is able to recruit or the amount of research grants it can garner. But in each instance the judgment about quality and effectiveness is inferential, not absolute, suggestive only, and depends on the original goals set forth by the institution as well as the definitions of quality, success, and effectiveness utilized both by the institution and the investigator it employs.

Another method is to ask for a critique and evaluation by outside "experts" who pass judgment on the performance and effectiveness of one's graduate products. Again, however, the problem of defining the criteria of judgment and standardizing the measuring devices looms large simply because the "absolute" and the "intrinsically valid" are ever elusive.

At least one other method remains. That is to go to the "products" of the institution — its graduates — and inquire of them how well or how poorly they feel they have been fitted for the tasks and situations they have encountered now that they have had experience in the tasks for which they have supposedly been trained. Such an approach has the advantage of being less inferential and less arbitrary in establishing criteria of judgment and requiring fewer oblique standards when compared with those methods which require being on the outside looking in. Many are the motorists who debate when to trade the old for the new and who wish they could ask their automobile engine exactly how many more

miles it will function. But, to return to the academic setting once again, it must be admitted the approach of going directly to the institution's products has its limitations and dangers. For one thing, it dismisses the possible contribution by the dispassionate outside observer and expert. But more important, it ignores the possibility that the graduate is not as aware as he should be—aware of the variety of his tasks, aware of the underlying meaning and goal-directedness of his busy-ness, aware of the potential toward which he might proceed. In other words, what he is doing and the training that stands behind it may in reality have no lasting relevance to the basic needs and exigencies about him. But this fact may not be recognized by him, and we will find him evaluating the wrong things for the wrong reasons.

But for all its hazards and limitations such an approach of going directly to the products themselves has merit in that at least gross indications of adequacy or inadequacy, superiority or inferiority will be gained, even though no character of the absolute can be assigned to the data.

It is just such information that we now have and will shortly present for one theological institution—Concordia Seminary of St. Louis, Mo. What we shall present are evaluations by graduates of Concordia Seminary in terms of their perceptions of the adequacy and relevance of their seminary training in the light of what they have experienced in their ministries since leaving the seminary. There is admittedly no control for how effective each man has been; nor do we know how perceptive each man is of the real meaning of what he does or faces.

But before presenting the data, a few

words about methodology and the sample are in order. Data were secured through mailed questionnaires sent to a 50 percent random sample of three recent graduating classes. The sample was chosen from the classes of 1954, 1959, and 1962 and included only those currently in the active ministry. The questionnaires were returned during the summer months of 1964, and by the termination date of Aug. 15, a 79 percent rate of return had been gained. Thus from an original sample of 152 graduates our study reports the responses of 120.<sup>1</sup> Included in the sample are men serving in nearly every type of ministerial service, including parish pastors in rural, urban, and suburban parishes in the U.S. and Canada, missionaries in foreign fields, military and institutional chaplains, and faculty members at a number of synodical institutions.

But now to our major question: How positively or negatively do the graduates of Concordia Seminary evaluate their training both in its general and specific aspects in the light of subsequent experience in the multifarious tasks of their ministries? First, in very general terms, how do seminary graduates rate or rank the major departments of theology from the perspective of intervening years and experience? One question in the study asked the respondents to evaluate or rate the departments of instruction at the seminary along two dimensions: (1) in terms of scholarship and contribution to knowledge (largely academic considerations), (2) in terms of practical, everyday relevance to the various

<sup>1</sup> The response rate for each class is as follows: 1954—82 percent; 1959—81 percent; 1962—71 percent. The number of respondents in each class were: 1954—43, 1959—52, 1962—25.

aspects and demands of their ministry. The respondents were instructed to use a 4-point scale ranging from "very relevant and helpful" through "quite relevant" and "somewhat relevant" to "not at all relevant and helpful." These ratings were then scaled so that a rank of "3" became the highest possible score, and a "0" represented an across-the-board evaluation as

way of practical, everyday relevance. One will note differences among departments, with the New Testament division of the Exegetical Department ranking highest on both the academic and practical scales. One must hasten to add, however, that though there are visual differences among the scores, the differences are not statistically significant when a .05 level of sig-

TABLE 1  
EVALUATION SCORES OF SEMINARY DEPARTMENTS

Department	Academic	Practical	Average
Exegetical (New Testament)	2.5	2.0	2.2
Exegetical (Old Testament)	2.1	1.5	1.8
Historical	1.7	1.3	1.5
Practical	1.9	1.9	1.9
Systematic	2.1	1.7	1.9

"not at all relevant or helpful." Table 1 above capsules the evaluations or ratings of the theological departments as given by the members of the three graduating classes in our sample.

Now, how to interpret the above results? Recognizing the lack of absolutized, uniform definitions of the ranking categories and a consequent variance of interpretation, one must take care not to press the data too far. But this much seems clear and, after persusal of the table above, almost too obvious to state: the seminary is neither castigated in any wholesale manner, nor does it come in for anything approaching universal praise and satisfaction. But when this is said, one must also note that there is a definite *lean* toward moderately high satisfaction. The overall ranking of all departments (not noted in Table 1) is 1.9. That is, the average evaluation of the seminary curriculum and training is but a shade below the level of "quite relevant and helpful," both in terms of academic contribution and growth and by

nificance is used. That is to say, differences as great as we observe among the department ratings could well have occurred by chance. At least we do not want to run the risk of asserting that there are differences when there is a high probability that the differences we observe are purely accidental.

From the above highly general introduction to the variability among graduates in their evaluations, we turn to some more specific items. That is, how well did their seminary training equip the graduates in our sample for various specific tasks, responsibilities, and social relationships encountered in their ministry? For 26 items of this nature the respondents were asked to evaluate their seminary training in terms of how well they were prepared to meet the demands of each situation or task. Six choices were given: (1) provided exceedingly well, (2) provided adequately, (3) provided poorly, (4) provided not at all (and no need for it in my estimation), (5) provided not at all (but should have

been included in my training), (6) not applicable (have not had to work in this particular sphere). Also, they were to rate each item along two dimensions, namely how well provided they were (1) with specific procedures and approaches, (2) with a general frame of reference from which the individual could proceed on his own to meet the situation relevantly.

In Table 2 below are listed in rank order

"cifics" are almost invariably lower than the ratings in the third column for "General." In other words, graduates of Concordia Seminary feel that their alma mater was more likely to give them a better general frame of reference from which to approach specific problems as they occurred than it was to prepare and arm them with specific procedures and approaches in advance. The spread ranges from .2 to .5 of a point

TABLE 2  
RATINGS OF THE QUALITY OF SEMINARY TRAINING  
FOR SPECIFIC MINISTERIAL TASKS

Task	Overall	Rating * Specifics	General
Preparation of sermons	2.4	2.3	2.5
Ministering to sick, dying, bereaved	1.9	1.8	2.1
Conduct of worship	1.9	1.7	2.0
Delivery of sermons	1.8	1.7	1.9
Confirmation instruction (youth)	1.8	1.6	1.9
Teaching and working with adults	1.7	1.6	1.8
Maintaining a personal life	1.6	1.4	1.8
Dealing with the "lodge problem"	1.6	1.4	1.7
Teaching and working with youth	1.5	1.3	1.7
Teaching and working with children	1.4	1.3	1.6
Confirmation instruction (adults)	1.4	1.2	1.6
Outreach to the unchurched	1.4	1.2	1.6
Dealing with the "divorce problem"	1.4	1.3	1.5
Counseling (particularly marital and premarital)	1.3	1.1	1.6
Teaching others to teach	1.3	1.2	1.5
Performing special ceremonies and services (such as weddings and funerals)	1.3	1.1	1.5
Public relations	1.3	1.1	1.5
Handling administrative details of the church office	1.3	1.1	1.4
Outreach to lapsed and lapsing members	1.2	1.0	1.4
Meeting the congregational budget	1.0	.9	1.2
How to relate to clergy of other denominations	.9	.7	1.1
Relating to community functions and activities	.9	.7	.9

\* As in Table 1, a score of "3.0" would be the highest possible score ("training provided exceedingly well"). A score of "2.0" indicates training provided "adequately"; a score of "1.0" registers training as "poor"; and a score of "0" indicates that in the mind of the graduate the training was not but should have been provided.

the combined ratings of the three classes in terms of their evaluation of their preparation by the seminary. We shall concentrate on the ratings in the first column under the heading "Overall." However, at this point it should at least be noted that the ratings in the second column for "Spe-

higher rating for the general frame of reference over the specific preparation. That this difference should occur is of course consistent with the educational philosophy of Concordia Seminary and should really come as no surprise.

But now we turn to a more careful look

at the overall ratings in the first column which capsule the ratings of the other two columns under the headings of "Specifics" and "General." We shall leave it to the reader to note in detail the ordering of the various items and shall here highlight only a few of the seemingly most significant facts evident from these ratings. It should be mentioned before proceeding, however, that there are significant differences among the three classes in their ratings which are not indicated in the table above. These differences among the classes are of very great importance and will be discussed in some detail toward the end of this paper. But now to the overall ratings which ignore differences among the three classes.

1) If we look to those functions ranked highest by the respondents, we note that they are those most closely related to the traditional tasks of and within the local congregation. Thus preaching, conduct of worship, ministry to the sick, dying, and bereaved, and confirmation instruction rank near the top.

2) The tasks rated lowest in terms of preparation are of three types:

- a) those tasks or functions which imply an outreach to or contact with the surrounding community whether that be "relating to community concerns," "relating to the clergy of other faiths," or "outreach to the unchurched."
- b) tasks which have only relatively recently ascended to prominence in the ministerial portfolio and do not fit in well with our traditional stereotype of the pastor as difficult to approach, dogmatic, and autocratic. In this connection we note that "counseling," "dealing with the 'divorce

problem,'" and "teaching others to teach" are tasks ranking in the lower half in terms of quality of preparation.

- c) those tasks, perennials that they are, which relate to administrative and budgetary requirements and responsibilities of the local congregation.

One finds in these observations and summaries words both of encouragement and provocation. On the one hand, graduates of the seminary feel themselves quite well prepared to preach, to lead in worship, to prepare for confirmation, and to minister to the special needs of the sick, dying, and bereaved. And these are certainly central tasks. On the other hand, *the graduates of the seminary in the past 10 years feel themselves generally to be either poorly prepared or totally unprepared by their seminary training to relate effectively to the functions and activities of the surrounding community* (69 percent gave this evaluation), *or to relate to the clergy of other denominations* (63 percent felt themselves poorly prepared or totally unprepared). Also, such contemporary concerns, demands, or problems as counseling or how properly to confront the phenomenon of divorce find graduates criticizing the seminary for inadequate preparation with unsettling frequency. Approximately half feel their preparation in these areas to have been nonexistent or at best "poor."

Although one might with some legitimacy counter this criticism by saying that guidance or training in these areas is not easy, it is clear the seminary must give increasing attention to attempting to meet these gaps or inadequacies.

Before proceeding to comparisons among the three classes we shall look briefly at but

a few other items by way of general evaluation of seminary training. One question in the study asked the respondents how well they felt their seminary training had equipped them to carry on independent work in the Old and New Testaments, utilizing the original languages. We find that 93 percent of the men in all three classes felt that their training for independent work in the New Testament was at least adequate, with 37 percent actually rating their equipping as having been "very well" conducted. Comparable figures for Old Testament independent work are 63 percent and 13 percent. The fact that 93 percent and 63 percent are the proportions rating seminary preparation for independent work in the New Testament and the Old Testament respectively as at least adequate appears on the surface at least to be encouragingly high.

However, when we proceed from the level of evaluating prior training and measure actual utilization of training and skills, the brightness of one's optimism begins to fade. The reported subsequent behavior of the graduates frequently reflects extensive disuse of the original texts. Our data tell us that 43 percent of the respondents never or only occasionally (less than once a month) use the Greek New Testament for sermon preparation and that 83 percent never or only occasionally use their Hebrew Old Testament. If we include those who claim to use the original languages "about once a month," we find that 52 percent of the graduates use the Greek New Testament once a month or less and that 91 percent use the Hebrew Old Testament once a month or less. These proportions are undeniably high and call for some careful thought and evaluation on the part of the

seminary, those people responsible for the church's program of higher education, and the graduates themselves. Actually the failure of many graduates to use the original languages regularly could itself be interpreted as a criticism of the training which has not sufficiently included a building-in of continuing motivation and need. But this is certainly one area where the question of the point at which the seminary's responsibility stops and that of the individual begins becomes crucial.

Perhaps it should be noted also that to some the data above might become ammunition for advocating a cutting back in the training in the Biblical languages: "If not used, why bother?" We shall not enter upon this argument here except to add another bit of data from the study which states clearly that the seminary graduates, even those who do not regularly resort to the original languages in their study, feel quite overwhelmingly that no cutback in language training is in order. In fact, some of them, anomalously, advocate an increase.

It is also worth noting that 93 percent of the respondents reported that they felt that their seminary training provided them with an adequate basic structure of Biblical theology into which they have been able to incorporate added knowledge and deepening insights.

One more bit of information before plunging into differences among the three classes. The respondents were asked to give their evaluations of the degree of stimulation imparted at the seminary particularly as this is related to their picture of and enthusiasm for the parish ministry. The results are as follows: 28 percent responded with "very stimulating"; 54 percent said "somewhat stimulating"; only

16 percent rated the picture of the parish ministry gained at the seminary as "not very stimulating". One individual said it was "too stimulating (idealistic)"; one didn't know what the picture was; none said "not at all stimulating." If we include the somewhat vague and noncommittal category of "somewhat stimulating" as at least evidencing a modicum of positive reaction, then 82 percent of the men give the seminary a "plus" rating along this dimension.

So much for an orientation to the evaluation of its training by the seminary's graduates. No final conclusions are in order at this point. But there is indication that the seminary is not coming off too badly in this evaluation. But at the same time we must note that praise is certainly not universal, clearly less than wholehearted, and not without qualification and differentiation.

We find ourselves gaining considerably in insight and information when differences among the three classes are evaluated. When the data began to come out of the processing machines, one phenomenon became almost immediately visible, namely that the three classes did not evaluate the various aspects of their training in an identical manner. The general impression was and still is that the more recent the graduate the higher his degree of satisfaction with his training. But to say this is really to let the cat out of the bag prematurely because such a bold summary statement must be made amid a number of qualifications and careful specifications. Also, before modifying the initial impression, we need to inspect some of the data items themselves to see exactly where the differences lie. This is mandatory because differences among the three classes do not *always* occur; above all, when there seem to be

differences, we find that frequently they are not statistically significant.

Earlier in this paper we looked at the overall average ratings of the theological departments at the seminary. Below in Table 3 is the same information but more detailed, particularly in distinguishing the three classes from one another.

One will note after even a casual inspection of the table below that there is an invariably higher degree of satisfaction with each theological department along both dimensions of academic and practical helpfulness indicated by the class of 1962 when compared with the class of 1954. However, it is of utmost importance to note that with the exception of the ratings for the Department of Practical Theology these differences are visual only and are not statistically significant. That is, except for the practical department ratings, we could have expected differences as great as we observe above by chance. In other words, we cannot posit greater satisfaction on the part of the 1962 graduates compared with the graduates of 1954 and 1959 except when they rate the practical department. Apparently there has been some greater change in the practical department's curriculum and/or personnel which has elicited the increased positive reaction. The fact that the practical department is the only department where a statistically significant change has occurred is in part traceable to the fact that of all departments it was rated lowest on the academic excellence side, and equally low with the Department of Historical Theology on the side of practical relevance, by the class of 1954. In other words, starting at a low point has permitted growth and improvement—growth and improvement which has apparently taken place.

But now we turn to some of the specific



TABLE 3  
EVALUATION OF SEMINARY DEPARTMENTS  
BY YEAR OF GRADUATION

Department	Class	Degree of Relevance and Helpfulness (in proportions)				Total
		Very	Quite	Somewhat	Not at all	
New Testament (academic)	1954	56%	34%	10%	—	100%
	1959	53%	40%	7%	—	100%
	1962	72%	28%	—	—	100%
New Testament (practical)	1954	24%	44%	29%	3%	100%
	1959	32%	45%	21%	2%	100%
	1962	48%	36%	16%	—	100%
Old Testament (academic)	1954	32%	34%	34%	—	100%
	1959	28%	47%	25%	—	100%
	1962	48%	40%	12%	—	100%
Old Testament (practical)	1954	7%	32%	51%	10%	100%
	1959	11%	28%	49%	12%	100%
	1962	20%	44%	36%	—	100%
History (academic)	1954	12%	54%	29%	5%	100%
	1959	13%	39%	41%	7%	100%
	1962	24%	40%	36%	—	100%
History (practical)	1954	5%	32%	51%	12%	100%
	1959	4%	26%	60%	10%	100%
	1962	16%	32%	44%	8%	100%
Practical (academic)	1954	10%	37%	51%	2%	100%
	1959	28%	49%	19%	4%	100%
	1962	40%	32%	24%	4%	100%
Practical (practical)	1954	12%	27%	49%	12%	100%
	1959	32%	42%	26%	—	100%
	1962	52%	32%	16%	—	100%
Systematics (academic)	1954	27%	46%	22%	5%	100%
	1959	28%	51%	19%	2%	100%
	1962	44%	36%	16%	4%	100%
Systematics (practical)	1954	12%	41%	37%	10%	100%
	1959	15%	43%	38%	4%	100%
	1962	24%	48%	20%	8%	100%

tasks for which we elicited evaluations of the quality of preparation. Again we note differences. At this point we shall not take the space to include the detailed tables. Suffice it to say that in a manner similar to the ratings of departments there are visual differences (with two exceptions) to indicate increasing satisfaction with the quality of preparation the more recent one's graduation from the seminary. Except for

seven instances, however, these are apparent differences only and are not statistically significant. But, note well, there *are seven areas* where differences among the three classes are statistically significant. A look at these should be highly instructive at this point. The areas in which the more recent graduates express greater satisfaction than their predecessors are the following: (1) specific aids for sermon preparation, (2)

specific guidance for leading in worship, (3) specific assistance for teaching young people, (4) counseling (both in specific techniques as well as general frame of reference), (5) specific approaches for dealing with the divorce problem, (6) a general frame of reference for relating to community functions and activities, and (7) specific preparation for teaching others

By way of interpreting these phenomena, we have to say first that the fact that the class of 1962 did not register greater satisfaction than the other two classes for all 22 variables, but only for 7 of them, gives strong indication that the seven areas of significant differences almost certainly represent areas where change has occurred and must be carefully inspected. In other words,

TABLE 4  
EVALUATION OF SEMINARY TRAINING FOR SPECIFIC TASKS  
BY YEAR OF GRADUATION

Task	Year	Quality of Preparation (in proportions)				Total
		Exceedingly Well	Adequately	Poorly	Not at all	
Sermon Preparation	1954	29%	61%	10%	—	100%
	1959	43%	50%	7%	—	100%
	1962	68%	24%	8%	—	100%
Leading in Worship	1954	25%	28%	62%	7.5%	100%
	1959	15%	52%	27%	6%	100%
	1962	40%	52%	8%	—	100%
Teaching Young People	1954	5%	43%	40%	12%	100%
	1959	13%	50%	35%	2%	100%
	1962	17%	67%	16%	—	100%
Counseling (specific)	1954	—	17%	37%	46%	100%
	1959	2%	29%	49%	20%	100%
	1962	16%	60%	16%	8%	100%
Counseling (general frame of reference)	1954	2%	29%	37%	32%	100%
	1959	13%	46%	35%	6%	100%
	1962	36%	52%	12%	—	100%
Dealing with the "Divorce Problem"	1954	—	15%	63%	22%	100%
	1959	4%	43%	37%	16%	100%
	1962	8%	42%	50%	—	100%
Relating to the Community	1954	—	16%	38%	46%	100%
	1959	2%	32%	23%	43%	100%
	1962	—	50%	45%	5%	100%
Teaching Others to Teach	1954	—	20%	43%	37%	100%
	1959	2%	43%	33%	22%	100%
	1962	8%	56%	28%	8%	100%

to teach. The responses of the three classes are summarized in Table 4 above.

In all instances cited above, the degree of satisfaction increases steadily with time. That is, the lowest satisfaction was invariably registered by the graduates of 1954; the highest satisfaction was indicated by the class of 1962; a median position was assumed by the graduates of 1959.

if the class of 1962 were to have registered greater satisfaction across the board, an interpretation impossible to refute could be that there is something in being close to the seminary in time which results in voicing a higher degree of satisfaction, and that the converse would obtain also, namely that the farther one is away from the seminary in terms of date of graduation the

greater will be one's criticism or lack of praise and satisfaction. That is, we might validly talk of "romantic" 2-year graduates and "realistic" 10-year graduates. Such an observation or conclusion is, however, simply not warranted by the data or the internal comparison of variables. This means that we need to pay serious attention both to those areas where improvements have apparently been forthcoming and to those areas where no change has been evident.

It should indeed be heartening both to seminary teaching personnel and to the church at large to learn that apparently there have been improvements in seminary training in such key areas of contemporary concern as pastoral counseling, ministry to youth, dealing with the "divorce problem," and the pastor relating to community life, as well as improvements in the training for the age-old central activities of the church — preaching and worship. The data definitely reveal change and improvement in these areas.

Of course, caution must be exercised in so summarizing our information. The data are not to be interpreted as giving incontrovertible evidence that improvement of individual performance has in fact occurred. Our data do not tell us that preaching has actually improved, or that the more recent the graduate the better able he is to lead his people in meaningful worship, or that he is in fact a better teacher of young people, or that he is an abler counselor, or that his handling of divorce problems is more helpful than that of his elder brethren, or that he is more skilled in relating church to community, or that he is better able to teach others to teach. These conclusions our data will not permit. The data say only that the more recent the

graduate the better *he* feels his seminary preparation in these areas to have been.

We are back to the qualifications with which this report began, namely that what we have are data that are not purely objective in the sense of being composed of dispassionate judgments by experts utilizing absolute, time-tested criteria, but are the reports of pastors who have evaluated their training in the light of subsequent experience. As such, the data do, however, possess the inherent value or advantage of representing the everyday firing-line utility or weakness of the resources with which one was equipped at the seminary. That is, how well do the men on the line feel they have been prepared for the daily tests and challenges?

It would seem the following conclusions have high validity:

1) The seminary should be encouraged by the fact that in most of the areas investigated it is judged by its products as doing a better than simply adequate job. Occasionally its performance is judged only "adequate." Seldom is its level and quality of preparation termed "less than adequate" or "not at all adequate." However, if perfection is the goal, it should be noted that the seminary is scored well below this level.

2) As indicated above, a number of areas clearly need strengthening and improvement. We shall not detail them here again, but refer the reader to Table 2 to note the areas scoring low.

3) The fact that the seminary's quality of preparation is generally judged higher by the more recent graduates would seem to say that the seminary has succeeded in improving its program, at least in certain areas or fields of training. For example, the practical department generally is rated sig-

nificantly higher by the more recent graduates. Also, a number of specific areas of training, rated low by graduates of 1954, are singled out for a fairly high degree of satisfaction by 1962 graduates. This conclusion rules out any interpretation of the data which would relate the higher degree of satisfaction indicated by the more recent graduates to lack of experience, lesser realism, maturity, or stability. Also ruled out would be the possibility that the higher degree of criticism of their training by the 10-year graduates might indicate a transference of feelings of personal inadequacy, failure, or frustration to the seminary. The "I'm not meeting up to standards; I'm not accomplishing much; must be the seminary's fault" type of explanation appears to have no validity at all. The other side of the coin — that more criticism by the men farthest removed in time from the seminary indicates a healthy cutting of the seminary's (mother figure) apron strings or umbilical cord — will not stand up either. The reason none of these possible explanations will stand is simply that the more recent graduates do not significantly differentiate themselves from their predecessors in expressing greater satisfaction in all or nearly all areas of training investigated. In fact, only about a third of the time do the more recent graduates express satisfaction that is significantly greater than the graduates of earlier years. This means that we look for explanation of the differences not by analyzing the men themselves but by inspecting what has happened at the seminary in the intervening years.

4) There is evidence that the seminary today is beginning to train men to confront contemporary problems or issues more rel-

evantly than 10 or even 5 years ago. Such a gain is, however, only relative, not high in absolute terms, and much in need of improvement.

5) Whatever advances in (4) above there have been, have not been at the expense of traditional tasks or functions of the ministry. For example, preparation for preaching and for conduct of worship as well as training in exegetical theology are ranked as high or higher by recent graduates as by those of 10 years ago.

6) In grand summary, the data in this study point to many areas where improvement is needed. There is additional information which comes from an open-ended question in the questionnaire which asked for suggested modifications and changes in the seminary's program. This information has not been included in this report.<sup>2</sup> In large part this is because of the great difficulty in systematizing the responses. But despite the weaknesses, inadequacies, and gaps that are indicated, there is a sufficient amount of satisfaction with the training experiences of its graduates that the seminary can take heart, be encouraged and stimulated to build on its present program and improve it. The feedback from its products, while not presenting a rosy glow in which to bask, is also not all gray and melancholy or a cause for despair. Encouragement, but with clear challenge, seems to summarize well what the seminary hears as its graduates speak.

St. Louis, Mo.

<sup>2</sup> In the course of this questionnaire study we secured many additional data on a fairly broad range of subjects which for lack of space and direct relevance to our topic were not included in this report. We hope to employ additional means for revealing and setting forth much of this information at a later date.