STEWARDSHIP AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FUND-RAISING PROGRAMME AT McMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

STEWARDSHIP AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FUND-RAISING PROGRAMME IN MCMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE

The shift from the paradigm of the Enlightenment (modernity) to post-modernity will have a significant impact on the concept and practice of stewardship in the church and in the theological seminary. This thesis project examines fund-raising under the emerging paradigm and offers proposals for the raising of funds for McMaster Divinity College. It does so by looking at current and potential donor sources in addition to examining and suggesting methodologies to assist in underwriting the visions and purposes of the College.

As a background, the study presents a brief analysis of the philosophical and theological roots of McMaster Divinity College. This is done by considering a number of the influences common to most theological schools founded in conjunction with North American universities in the 19th century. The influences peculiar to McMaster are considered as well.

The thesis project also examines several points of conflict that have arisen periodically between the College and its long-time sponsor, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, in order to understand better the relationships between the two institutions. This is accomplished by consideration of their legal relationship and the circumstances leading to a denomonational schism in 1927, the Sunday school "curriculum controversy" of 1964-65, and, more recently, the so-called Bishop Robinson controversy of the mid-1980s.

The meaning of stewardship has changed both in its theological concept and its usage in society. It continues to change. Several theologians and biblical scholars of the post-modern era are returning to a more biblically informed understanding of stewardship with its much greater emphasis on accountability and responsibility, not only for the use of personal resources such as money and property, but for all the resources that God has entrusted to his people.

The theological school likely will continue to be the primary training institution for Christians who desire more formal theological education but the churches likely will wish to see those teaching in and administering the Divinity College model the qualities of the Christian steward. That probability will be a major factor for recruitment and financial support.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The past two and one-half years have sped by as I have been engaged in the work needed to fulfill the course requirements of the Doctor of Ministry programme. There is one factor that is common to all facets of the programme and that is my dependency on others.

I have enjoyed thoroughly the camaraderie and the friendship of my fellow students. We have critiqued each other, helped each other, and have dined with each other--usually at a well-known Chinese restaurant in Hamilton and under the culinary supervision of James Leung. I owe my classmates my thanks and appreciation for their friendship.

No words are able to express the gratitude I owe to Dr. William R. Wood and to Dr. William H. Brackney for their insightful criticism and their constant encouragement during the entire process. They have been very generous in granting me access to relevant files and suggesting books that would expand my understanding of the relationships between the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec and McMaster Divinity College. I also owe Dr. Ronald E. Vallet a debt of thanks for introducing me to a deeper realization of stewardship and for his willingness to share with me his insights into that very important and timely subject. Michael E. C. Lang and Dr. A. R. Goldie contributed to my understanding of the administrative and financial aspects of the McMaster Divinity College and for their help I am grateful. I also acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Andrew R. Irvine who, as Director of the Doctor of Ministry Programme, has been generous with his time and encouragement in helping me over the administrative hurdles.

As one who does not have a great deal of technical expertise in matters of things mechanical, I thank Andrew Bellous, Terri Galan, Marge Geroux, Nolan Lee, Noelene Mainville, and Dave Stephens for helping me through the computer and typewriter maze. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance of Judith Colwell and Lorraine Brooks for their help in obtaining information from the Canadian Baptist Archives and to Lee and Marilyn Tuson who graciously opened their home to me when I needed a place to stay near Hamilton.

Finally, I note the tremendous encouragement from my ever-patient wife, Dianne. She literally gave up days and weeks of time with me as I laboured on the thesis project and, prior to that, the course work. Standing by Dianne and me were our children, James and Susan, Michael, Michelle, my father W. Raymond Morgan, and my mother, Barbara Speers. They may have wondered what I was doing and why I was doing it but they never wavered in their support.

Kenneth R. Morgan

Sarnia, Ontario

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Albert of Brandenburg (1490-1545)[1] was an ambitious young man. Already a high ranking prelate of the Church at age twenty-three, he coveted the historic, prestigious, and of more immediate importance, vacant archbishopric of Mainz. Albert faced two problems. Canon law forbade a cleric from holding more than one office simultaneously. That was not a particularly insuperable difficulty because it could be circumvented by purchasing a special dispensation from the pope allowing him to occupy the vacant see. The second problem was somewhat more formidable. Albert was short of the necessary cash to purchase a dispensation and Pope Leo X (1475-1521, Pope 1513-1521) was not disposed to extend him credit for the full amount. He required a substantial down payment as proof of Albert's sincerity. But Leo was in the midst of a beautification programme of the City of Rome. He, too, needed money in order to complete the centrepiece of this endeavour, St. Peter's Basilica. Albert was encouraged to raise the cash by borrowing it from one of the wealthy German banking families. He was then authorized by the pope to sell indulgences, documents that, upon purchase,

[1] The information for this story is taken from Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966), 305, 308, 315; and Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), 708-10.

entitled the targeted souls languishing in purgatory[2] to be freed from that place. In this manner, he could pay his debt to the bankers as well as fulfill his obligations to Rome.

To help him in his quest, Albert secured the services of Johann Tetzel (1465?-1519), a Dominican monk whose imagination and zeal for the task could not be questioned, but whose theological foundation for the work was, at best, suspect. Even his superiors later reprimanded him for his flamboyant zeal at the expense of a sound theology. Tetzel traveled the German provinces in which he was authorized to do so and sold indulgences with verve and imagination. A couplet summarizing and, at the same time, caricaturing Tetzel's theology was soon heard in the German towns and villages where the fund raising monk was permitted to ply his trade. The English translation is as follows:

> As soon as the coin in the coffer rings,
> another soul from purgatory springs.

Tetzel's methods of fund raising became part of the catalyst that helped to launch the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther (1483-1546), Professor of Theology at the University of Wittenburg, criticized Tetzel's techniques and the theology that he used to substantiate his practices. Luther challenged Tetzel to a debate on the issue as was the custom of the day. It was a debate that triggered one of the most cataclysmic periods in history and its results even now, continue to affect the way that Christians think about the

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[2] Purgatory, in the Roman Catholic tradition of the day, was the place where the souls of the dead resided until they were purged or cleansed of their temporal sins. Indulgences shortened or even ended the soul's stay in purgatory so that it would be transported to heaven. The practice of selling indulgences became an increasingly popular way of raising funds for the various papal projects at the time.

Bible, theology, and more pertinent to this thesis project, stewardship and its corollary, fund raising.

Raising funds has always been something of a minefield. The temptation of succumbing to the ancient philosophical conundrum of "the end justifies the means" is ever present and alluring. John Reumann, Professor of New Testament studies at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, referred to Johann Tetzel as the "patron saint of all ruthless, organization-minded fund-raisers."[3]

It is true that some fund raisers such as Tetzel, have earned a certain notoriety for using unscrupulous methods to achieve their goals. Moreover, it is often the case that these images help to form the public profile of the fund raiser. People know that institutions, including churches and religious seminaries, require money if they are to continue functioning. But the person who is responsible for raising those funds is sometimes seen as a necessary evil and is caricatured, as Johann Tetzel was, in separating the gullible, the fearful, and the ignorant from their money for the purposes of the institution he/she serves. Nonetheless, the fact remains that fund raising is critical to the success of any organization not able to generate enough income from its own resources (interest or dividends from endowment funds, for example). In order to mitigate the negative image many in the public have of fund raisers, institutions have either coined or employed words such as "stewardship" or "Financial Development Officer" to describe the office of fund raiser or fund raising duties of the organization.

Fund raising is an integral part of a seminary's *raison d'être* not simply to enable the institution to flourish and fulfill its mandate, but also to be accountable to God and

the Christian community from which the resources entrusted to it have come. For too long, the western church has equated fund raising with the historically much more comprehensive term, stewardship. Here it will be argued that fund raising is a very important facet of stewardship but it is not stewardship *per se*.

However, in the public mind, the two terms, if not synonymous, are inextricably linked. When one considers the fund raising activities of development departments in institutions like universities, hospitals, seminaries, and even churches,[4] the word stewardship readily comes to mind. Nevertheless, the two terms have not been synonymous for most of the church's history. Synonymy is a creation of modernity or the Enlightenment paradigm.

Much of the first part of this thesis project will be devoted to exploring the biblical, theological, and historical roots of stewardship. This will be followed by a consideration of the emerging concepts of stewardship and the implications that they may have on institutions such as McMaster Divinity College (MDC). It is interesting that scholarly examination of the stewardship theme is of very recent origin. Indeed, most of the work has been done within the last two decades and the great majority of that in the last ten years. Ironically, such an ancient theme, rarely explored in the annals of the church, is finally coming into its own.

The middle part of the thesis project will focus on several of the historical and legal facets of MDC. Consideration will be given to the historical and legal relationships between the College and the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec (BCOQ) and

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[3] John Reumann, *Stewardship & the Economy of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Indianapolis: The Ecumenical Center for Stewardship Studies, 1992), 77.

between the College and McMaster University (MU). The historical, financial, and until 1957, legal relationships of all three institutions, have been inextricably bound together.

The third section will investigate stewardship within the context of the College itself. A synopsis of the history of the fund raising aspect of stewardship by the College will be offered. Income and expenditure statements from 1970-96 will be analyzed to try to determine emerging, long-term trends with respect to sources of income. Student demographics will be considered briefly as they relate to the numbers of students who have attended MDC from 1990-97 and the Christian traditions from which they have come in order to ascertain, if possible, any trends that will impact on programme funding.

Finally, the last section will look at a proposed programme of funding for the College. It will be set out in terms of a methodology--a methodology currently in place but not developed to a fuller potential because of a lack of resources--and an examination of a planned giving programme, including endowments.

Initially, the writer sought to understand better the relationship between MDC and BCOQ by examining the legal and historical circumstances governing that connection. The candidate has experienced some discomfort in the sometimes raucous, even vitriolic attacks on MDC at a number of BCOQ assemblies he has attended as a delegate and pastor. Money was usually at the heart of the discord.

The candidate is no longer in the pastorate full-time and is looking to assist churches and institutions in understanding the marked changes taking place mainly because of the transition from modernity to the so-called "post-modern" era. He has

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[4] The writer's home church has a "stewardship committee" whose purpose is to

centred on the theme of "stewardship in the seminary" because he has a strong desire to see the seminary continue as a means to train men and women for the church's ministries. One of the ways that this may be achieved is by helping the seminary to develop a stewardship programme that incorporates the very recent insights of sound, biblical scholarship. It is hoped that a comprehensive and stable fund raising programme will emerge to help meet the financial needs of the next decade or two.

The candidate's experience and training and his natural inclinations have combined to help him appreciate the value and possibilities of the institution for achieving goals that would be much more difficult, if not impossible, to attain in isolation. Moreover, a sound, biblically based, stewardship programme should go a long way in dispelling mistrust on the part of the public of Christian institutions. The ghost of Johann Tetzel may not be completely exorcised--it will always be the mentor of the "quick-buck" fundraiser--but at least it would not be able to gain "patron saint" status with respect to MDC. That itself, in these cynical days, is a major achievement.

But even a change of thinking with respect to the concept of stewardship, will not cure our unhappy tendency to debase a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the topic. The ever-skeptical Christian philosopher, Jacques Ellul (1912-1994), has reminded us just how prone the Christian church is to adapting itself to the current, worldly thinking:

> Nor must Christians accept all the attacks on the church's past and then make the rejoinder: "Yes, but see how things have changed today." Yesterday the church was against the poor, today it favours socialism, communism, and immigrant workers. Yesterday it sponsored monarchy, today it is for democracy. Yesterday it supported patronage, today it favors the unions. Yesterday it claimed to have absolute truth and was dogmatic, today it lets people believe what they like.

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develop programmes to raise funds for the congregation's various ministries.

> Yesterday it championed a fierce and rigid sexual morality, today it is for abortion, homosexuality, etc. One might continue indefinitely... There is no progress here. The church has simply adopted wholesale the ideas and manners of modern society as it did those of past societies. Even in defending the poor it is no more true today than it was one hundred or two hundred years ago. The betrayal is exactly the same. No truth is incarnate in this simple conformity to the dominant trend in our society. We have precisely the same subversion of Christianity along with pride to understand the gospel...and the hypocrisy of beating the breast of previous generations for Christian faults.[5]

A sober thought indeed! It is easy to flail previous generations for present circumstances. We have been shaped by the past more than many of us would care to admit. But one of the fatal errors of contemporary thinking is to ignore the past altogether and fail to learn from it. The philosopher, George Santayana (1863-1952), made the trenchant observation, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."[6] One of the dangers of any current generation trying to deal with the history of the previous ones is to fall into the trap of downgrading much of what has gone on before and surveying history from the artificially lofty perch of the present. Hence, Renaissance thinkers labeled the period following the fall of the Roman empire, "the Dark Ages" and more recently, the philosophers of the eighteenth century applied the sobriquet, "Enlightenment" to their way of thinking. In both instances, the past was denigrated and largely ignored.

A Christian understanding of stewardship is being explored as never before. We ought to be able to learn from the past--to build on its strengths, and there are many as will be shown, as well as to learn from its shortcomings. Hopefully, it will be done in a

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[5] Jacques Ellul, *The Subversion of Christianity*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 8-9.

[6] George Santayana, in *Peter's Quotations: Ideas for Our Times* ed. Laurence J. Peter (Toronto, New York, London: Bantam Books, 1979), 440.

spirit of humility and gratitude for those who have pioneered in this fascinating dimension of Christian life.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL, HISTORICAL, AND THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

"The stewardship tradition," wrote Douglas John Hall, Professor of Christian Theology at McGill University in Montreal, "which is rooted in biblical religion and has of necessity been retained in the experience of North American Christianity, has come of age."[7] Professor Hall has identified two major foundation stones upon which the modern concept of Christian stewardship is built, the Bible and North American Christianity. It is no coincidence that current notions of stewardship have arisen in North America. Indeed, a number of authors of which John Reumann is representative, have observed that stewardship in its modern form is the major contribution of the North American church to Christian theology. "Stewardship is by and large *North American* and *Protestant* in its origins and development. There is relatively little influence from, or reflection of, the stewardship movement in Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy, let alone Judaism or the non-Christian religions."[8]

To be sure, the North American contribution to stewardship is substantial, but it too, has been heavily influenced by concepts already developed and inherent in the

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[7] Douglas John Hall, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; New York: Friendship Press, 1994), 11.

[8] Reumann, *Stewardship & the Economy of God*, 59.

growing notion of voluntarism in Great Britain[9] prior to the nineteenth century. North American contributions to the theology of stewardship owe a great deal to the voluntary principle as it developed in the Dissenting churches in England in the seventeenth century and later in the Church of England in the eighteenth century. By the middle of the nineteenth century voluntarism was a widely accepted principle in British society. William Brackney, Principal of McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, ON and a church historian, has noted:

> At the mid-point of the Victorian era, Christian voluntarism reached its pinnacle of success and influence. The various associations went about doing good and nurturing their publics. Annually meetings of the entire membership of the societies were held at which reports were featured on the progress of the objective; a sermon or lecture from a prominent enthusiast was delivered plus a meal in most instances. Officers were elected and the managers were authorized to conduct business in the ensuing months. Among most English societies the work was actually carried forth by a paid staff person who could be a member of the clergy, a housematron or someone dedicated to the purpose. Persons on stipend were limited in order to keep the overhead expenses low. The exceptions to this rule were the great missionary bodies and printing missions which required more personnel in management and distribution.
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> The English religious associations became so numerous by 1850 that they dominated the Christian world and created the national social agenda. As Thomas Babington Macaulay wrote, "There is scarcely one Englishman in ten who has not belonged to some association for distributing books, or for prosecuting them; for sending invalids to the hospital or beggars to the treadmill; for giving plate to the rich or blankets to the poor."[10]

Key elements of stewardship are found in voluntarism, namely the most expeditious use of resources and accountability.

The disestablishment of the church early in the histories of Canada and the United

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[9] See William H. Brackney, *Christian Voluntarism in Britain and North America: A Bibliography and Critical Assessment*, (Westport, CT & London: Greenwood Press, 1995), cc. 1-2.

[10] *Ibid.*, 29.

States has compelled churches to look elsewhere than to governments for their funding in order to survive. Moreover, with the rise of the missionary movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the multitude of para-church organizations following World War II, churches, denominations, and independent mission agencies, have been forced to seek relatively stable sources of income through the use of fund raising programmes. Such programmes, at least until the last two decades or so, were euphemistically labeled "stewardship." The label still is used extensively and in many quarters across the Christian theological spectrum refers to financial matters and the use of time and individual talents.

Vast amounts of money have been raised in support of ecclesiastical and missionary enterprises. Unfortunately, much chicanery also has occurred in the name of stewardship as well. There has been no shortage of "fast buck" artists and other assorted swindlers dressed in clerical garb and conversant with the language of the saints, who seek to manipulate the emotions of good-hearted yet gullible Christians ready to donate to a worthy cause. The spirit of Johann Tetzel roams the Earth still, seeking whose bank balances he may devour.

The problem may be due in part to the lack of a theology of stewardship. Reumann has observed that the North American concept of stewardship of necessity has been "*'practical'*--perhaps a characteristic American virtue."[11] He went on to point out that stewardship "has not so much had a theology of its own as it has been a vast movement *in search of a theology*."[12] There is something to that charge. Until recently,

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[11] Reumann, *Stewardship and The Economy of God*, 59.

[12] *Ibid.*

stewardship has been confined largely to financial matters. But there is now a significant trend toward a much more inclusive understanding of stewardship. Not only are *all* earthly resources included in this notion of stewardship but the practice of stewardship is no longer confined to the church. Everyone, it seems, is a steward whether he/she be saint or completely outside the church. It appears too, that the word stewardship has been co-opted by the secular press to describe the manner in which a person fulfills her/his vocation. One large American daily went so far as to describe the tenure of a deceased bartender in an on-campus pub of a large university as "stewardship."[13]

To be sure there is considerable confusion regarding the biblical understanding, theology, and meaning of stewardship. This chapter will present biblical, historical, and theological overviews of the subject. In addition, some examples of current theological beliefs and practices will be considered for there has been a veritable explosion of writings on the topic in the last fifteen years. A working definition of stewardship will be derived from this exploration as well.

Ancient and Biblical Meanings

The notion of stewardship is by no means the exclusive discovery of the North American church in an attempt to meet pressing practical needs. Its roots are found in the ancient cultures that contributed to the mindsets of the Old and New Testament writers

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[13] *Ibid.*, xiii.

and to the early church fathers. It is known for instance, from St. Paul's letter to the church at Rome (15: 25-26) and what the church has called his second letter to the church at Corinth, chapters 7-9, that the apostle raised funds for the relief of the Christians in Jerusalem. His rationale for so doing undoubtedly was based partly on his understanding of the Mosaic law (e.g., Leviticus 19: 9-10, and Psalm 112: 9) --the only scripture passages he has quoted in these three chapters from 2 Corinthians. God is a generous God and by inference, his people ought to emulate his example by being generous too. This has not been lost on certain fundraisers. Indeed, the phrase from 2 Corinthians 9: 7, "for God loves a cheerful giver," is so readily quoted (and so often perverted) by many modern fund raisers in concluding their pitches in the name of Christian stewardship as to border on blasphemy. But it does show that even this often abused phrase points to an attempt to justify fund raising activities by referring (not deferring) to biblical authority--hence the need for a full-blown theology of stewardship.

In his foreword to Reumann's book, *Stewardship & the Economy of God*, Ronald E. Vallet, former Executive Director of the Ecumenical Center for Stewardship Studies, wrote: "In the 1970s, both the word "stewardship" and the practice of stewardship went into decline in many churches. A rediscovery of the term by journalists and society in general has since elevated stewardship into a new and somewhat different prominence."[14]

There is an irony here if indeed, the church has neglected the "practice of stewardship," to use Vallet's phrase, and the world outside the church has discovered it. This will be discussed later in this chapter for it colours the very perception of stewardship that many inside and outside the church have.

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[14] *Ibid.* ix.

The fact is that those in the church who are thinking about stewardship, are returning to a more classically inspired model--one that finds its roots in antiquity. The model, although based on Scripture, is nonetheless profoundly affected by cultural mindsets not formed solely by Scripture. This is certainly true in the New Testament (NT). The Greek word, *oikonomia*, often translated as "stewardship" is primarily a Greco-Roman concept and was co-opted by Jesus to illustrate the responsibility for managing the resources with which God has entrusted his people. Axiomatically, they are also accountable to God, as a household steward was accountable to the home/estate owner (Luke 12: 42-48). The root word for *oikonomia* is *oikos* or house. In the homes and on the estates of the wealthy, an *oikonomos* or steward, usually a slave, was appointed by the owner to oversee the actual day-to-day household chores and the administration of household finances, including business transactions (Matthew 25: 14-30). It was a position requiring considerable managerial skills, diplomacy, and intellect depending on the size of the estate and the disposition of the master. The point is that the steward, no matter his capacity and responsibilities, was ultimately accountable to the owner and responsible for those resources entrusted to him.

Stewards were slaves. They may have been very intelligent, highly educated, well trained, and even well respected, but they were, in the final analysis, slaves and fully accountable to their masters. It is a concept so foreign to the late twentieth century North American who enjoys such a plethora of civil liberties and rights, as to approach the inconceivable. Yet over the centuries that the Bible was written, the status of the steward was always that of a slave. The story of Joseph in the book of Genesis is illustrative.

The reader is told that Joseph was sold by his brothers to a passing band of

Midianite (Ishmaelite) traders for twenty pieces of silver (Genesis 37: 25-28). The Midianites, in turn, took the hapless Joseph to Egypt where "Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there" [15]--no doubt at a tidy profit for the Midianite traders. Joseph was clearly a slave. He had no freedom of action. He was bought and sold just like any other commodity in the marketplace and he was expected to serve the purposes for which his owner purchased him. And yet, as one reads on in Genesis 39, one finds that Joseph's abilities were recognized by Potiphar and that his responsibilities grew commensurably with his demonstrated talents. "So Joseph found favor in his [Potiphar's] sight and attended him; he made him overseer in his house and put him in charge of all that he had" (Genesis 39: 4). Gordon J. Wenhem, Professor of Old Testament at the College of St. Paul and St. Mary in Cheltenham, England, has offered the following comment on the dynamics that have been recorded in the passage:

> Indeed, so obvious was Joseph's magic touch that his master realized God was with him and promoted him from indoor worker to his personal assistant. שרת "served" is close in meaning to עבד "to work (for)," but whereas the latter term can be used for menial jobs often done by slaves (29:15, 18, 20), the former term always implies personal service. Thus Joshua was Moses' servant (Exod 24:13; Josh 1:1), Elisha was Elijah's (1 Kgs 19:21), and prince Amnon had servants (2 Sam 13:17) (THWAT 2: 1019-22). "Put him in charge of his household," i.e., he was appointed chief manager or steward of his household (cf. Luke 16:1). Such officials (*mer-per*) are often mentioned in Egyptian texts. They were in charge not "just of the house but the whole estate and all the property" (Vergote, *Joseph en Egypte*, 25).[16]

Although Joseph enjoyed the trust and confidence of his master, was his status

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[15] Genesis 39:1. All Scripture quotations are taken form the NRSV unless otherwise stated.

[16] Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 2: Genesis 16-50* (Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 374.

any different from the time his brothers sold him into slavery? The writer thinks not, for it is recorded that after he displeased his master (on a trumped up charge of sexual assault), he was cast into prison without any form of trial or means of appeal. He was, in fact, treated as a slave (Genesis 39:6b-20).

The NT picture of the steward or *oikonomos* was not so different. Christ employed the metaphor of the estate steward (cf. Luke 16:1-13; 19:11-27), with considerable effect to show the responsibility and accountability of the household steward to his master. The NT authors, apart from the writers of the Gospels, did not develop the stewardship notion more fully at least in terms of money and finances. But Paul and Peter did apply the stewardship concept to their respective callings as ministers of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Peter 4:10), thereby opening the door to a much wider latitude of meaning and interpretation of the concept of stewardship. It likely could be argued that the two apostles created a theological growth industry that was exploited by early church leaders and followed by their spiritual descendants to the time of the Enlightenment.

However, concomitant with the increasing dominance of the Enlightenment paradigm, stewardship, if thought of at all by the theologians of the period was *de facto*, left in the hands of more pragmatic practitioners of the faith whose purpose was to raise money for ministry and mission. The breadth and potency of the stewardship concept was left to be rediscovered by the theologians of the post-modern era as will be shown below.

But the early church revealed a much different picture. "Thus," J. Goetzmann of Essen, Germany, has written in his article on "House" in *The New International*

Dictionary of New Testament Theology, "in 1 Cor. 4:1 Paul introduces himself and his fellow-workers as 'servants of Christ and stewards of the mystery of God.' Likewise in 1 Cor. 9:17, Paul calls the preaching of the gospel a 'commission' (*oikonomia*) from which he cannot withdraw."[17]

Goetzmann further suggested that additional uses of the word *oikonomia* in Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus (1:10; 3:9) were picked up by such early church fathers as Irenaeus (140?-202?) and Justin Martyr (100?-165?) in their attempts to show that stewardship has a soteriological aspect to it as well.[18] This notion of what later became known as "salvation history," was described by Reumann as a "synthesis of history and salvation for theology and Christian life through a system marked by the subjective starting point of our salvation 'in Christ,' an objective view of God's actions, and an emphasis on the Bible as a whole rather than a compendium of proof texts."[19] Salvation history would be more fully explicated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Peter's notion of stewardship, although similar to that of Paul, did not speak of himself and his colleagues as being "stewards of God's mysteries." Rather, he challenged Christians to be, "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, [and to] serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received."[20] J. Ramsey Michaels, sometime Professor of Christian Origins at Southwest Missouri State University, has

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[17] J. Goetzmann, "House," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 2, gen. ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 255.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] Reumann, *Stewardship & the Economy of God, 79.*

translated the phrase, *poikiles charitos theou*, to mean "of God's diversified grace."[21]

Michaels went on to add:

> Instead of administrators of "God," or of "the mysteries of God," Peter refers here to administrators of "God's diversified grace." Having already used "grace," for the salvation awaiting those who believe in Christ (1:10, 13; 3:7; 2:19, 20 are different), Peter now points to that eschatological "grace" at work even now in the worship and ministries of the Christian congregations to which he writes. In that sense it is, ποικίλης, "diversified"; although it will come all at once, in power, at the "revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:13), it also comes in small increments through the varied ministries of those who speak and those who serve in every congregation.[22]

By the close of the NT canon, stewardship has been personalized and individualized--the responsibility of every Christian. Jesus certainly inferred this in his various parables of the household stewards in the gospels, particularly in the parable of the talents or, as the NRSV has entitled it, "The Parable of the Ten Pounds."[23] Paul and Peter extended the concept to include the gospel and "God's diversified grace" as responsibilities entrusted to Christians in the household of God. The steward was no longer just the office of an important functionary. Stewardship included all who were within the household. Each steward is responsible not only to the Master of the household, but to the other members of the household as well.

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[20] 1 Peter 4:10.

[21] J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 49: 1 Peter* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1988), 249.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] Luke 19:11-27.

The "Grand Design"

The meaning of *oikonomia* and its cognates was greatly expanded in the Patristic era. It has already been seen that St. Paul looked upon himself and his colleagues as "stewards of God's mysteries."[24] Greek thought extended economy to include "arrangements in life generally or in specific areas such as literature and rhetoric"[25] long before Christianity arrived on the scene. "The pre-Socratic philosophers," as Reumann has noted, "spoke of such a scheme of arrangement in nature. They reasoned from this to an 'administration' (*oikonomia*, among other words) of the universe. God was viewed as 'administrator' managing the affairs of human beings and the whole universe in such a way as to fit the divine design and will."[26] Later, Stoicism refined this idea of God being Master of the universe and human beings playing their assigned roles as his stewards. Reumann observes:

> A historian with this outlook might well regard the writer's task to be, as a steward of history, to ferret out any divine pattern to historical events and then to give structure to it in clear literary expression-- in short, the divine economy, in an *oikonomia* of language, by an *oikonomos* or steward in history. At least some of this approach and vocabulary was part of the theological *koine* ("common language") of New Testament times. It was developed by the thinkers, writers, and theologians of the centuries that followed. It is all part of the rich heritage of "stewardship."[27]

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[24] 1 Corinthians 4:1

[25] Reumann, 14.

[26] *Ibid.*, 15.

[27] *Ibid.*, 24.

The Stoic view greatly influenced many early Christian thinkers from Tatian (110?-172?) to Augustine (354-430). The fathers synthesized the biblical notions of stewardship with the much more expansive understanding of the Stoics so as to render it Christian and all-encompassing. Reumann noted: "The concept became increasingly commonplace as Christians sought to speak meaningfully about the world in which they lived as God's people under the divine governance."[28]

History had a purpose. It had a goal. It was teleological. There was a strong sense of design to it. Historians merely had to examine past events to detect divinity at work and discern the patterns of God's thought because everything that happened, happened within the economy of the universal plan and purpose. The beleaguered Christians of the pre-Constantinian church could have said "Amen!" with their later brothers and sisters in late twentieth century North America had they access to the *New International Version* translation of the Bible. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."[29] That concept of divine stewardship, later referred to by recent theologians as the "grand design,"[30] was to dominate the Christian, hence the western European sense of history until the onslaught of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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[28] *Ibid.*, 26-27.

[29] Romans 8:28 (*NIV*).

[30] Reumann, 30, has cited C. A. Patrides, *The Grand Design of God: The Literary Form of the Christian View of History* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).

Current Thinking--A Return to the Grand Design?

The Enlightenment gave the *coup de grace* to the classical version of the grand design paradigm of history and, in the process, shattered the sense of stewardship that had prevailed for so many centuries. The notion that European Christendom had a unique place and purpose in the overall scheme of things was eclipsed ultimately by the idea that a person could use her/his abilities and whatever earthly resources he/she could muster to advance her/his own interests. To whom could a person be accountable for the use or abuse of resources? The Enlightenment ushered in, albeit gradually, the age of individualism. Natural resources, labour, capital, and technology have become tools to amass personal and corporate wealth and to advance those interests. Resources, whatever their type, are to be exploited, not administered. Giant, multi-national corporations are, in effect, accountable to no one except their shareholders, for the manner in which they handle the resources they control. This is especially so in some of the so-called Third World countries that, although rich in natural or human resources, lack the political and administrative infrastructures and sometimes the will, to monitor the activities of the multi-nationals and curb abuses to the nationals working for these companies and/or to the environment. If one national government threatens to employ what some of these organizations perceive to be overly strict controls, the company is able to move to a more "friendly" territory, taking taxes and jobs with it.

The notion of corporate stewardship is often limited to the earnings per share payable to investors. The more profits, the better stewards of the company's assets

management is seen to be. Great wealth and innovation have resulted in a standard of living in the western world of such magnitude as to be unparalleled historically in light of the affluence enjoyed by so many people. But, the price has been high in terms of social dysfunction and environmental despoilment--conditions that, until recently, normally were seen as being beyond the responsibility of individuals and corporations. Within the Enlightenment paradigm or modernity, the autonomous individual became the focus of legal and social attention. Interestingly, when legislators came to wrestle with the legal ramifications of companies being formed for the purposes of establishing businesses, but wanting liability restricted to the assets of the business and not those of the individual shareholders, a legal fiction was created to treat the company itself as a person. The individual, including the corporate individual, became supreme. That supremacy is epitomized in the statement uttered to a U.S. Senate committee in 1953 by Charles Wilson (1890-1961), sometime U.S. Secretary of Defense and the board chairman of General Motors (1941-53) : "What's good for the country is good for General Motors, and *vice versa*."[31]

That is changing. Within the last generation, organizations concerned about the environment have sprung up. A series of large scale crises from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in the Ukraine to the gaping holes in the world's ozone layer to the overfishing of cod off the Newfoundland coast have given fresh credence to an old belief that what we do individually and corporately has impact on the created world around us. A new sense of accountability for the manner in which we use and sometimes abuse the resources with

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[31] *The Columbia Dictionary of Quotations*, ed. Robert Andrews (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 114.

which we have been entrusted is beginning to emerge. The word "stewardship" has begun to assume something of its original meaning in that humans are no longer seen solely as isolated, autonomous beings, a notion so long cherished by Enlightenment thinkers. It is true that stewardship[32]--a word, interestingly enough, that comes from the old Anglo-Saxon "sty-ward" meaning keeper of the pig sty, hence one who ensured a supply of meat during the long, dark winters of England--is no longer the purview of the Christian church. The word is uniquely English and is a worthy translation of the Greek word, *oikonomos*, so much so that even German translators have coined the word, *die Stewardschiffe*[33], to effect the meaning of stewardship in that language. "The stewardship tradition" as D. J. Hall put it, "has come of age."[34] Perhaps a new variation of the grand design is not far behind.

Theological and Methodological Implications of Stewardship

Theological Roots in Modernity

"A church that worships the God known in Israel and in Jesus Christ and that seeks to live in responsibility to its Lord in the world will require a broader meaning of economy than that propounded in the market society today."[35] So wrote Douglas Meeks,

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[32] Reumann, *Stewardship*, 6.

[33] *Ibid.*, 52.

[34] Hall, *The Steward*, 11.

[35] M. Douglas Meeks, *God the Economist* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 2.

Professor of Systematic Theology at Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, in his elucidation of the metaphor of God as economist. Meeks, along with several other current theologians, has taken a long, hard look at the impact modern economies are having on workers and the environment. In the opening paragraph of his preface to *God The Economist*, Meeks has focussed on the problem as it relates to human livelihood:

> God does not appear in the modern market. For most economists this is as it should be. It is in no way necessary, according to modern economic theory, to consider God when thinking about the economy. Indeed, the absence of God in economic matters is viewed as necessary to the great advances in modern economy. The difficulty with modern market economics, however, is that human livelihood is also left out of the theory and practice of the market economy. This is not the result of the market *per se* but of certain modern assumptions about the human beings and nature that stand behind the market. Are there significant connections, though masked, between the absence of God and the disregard for human livelihood?[36]

Max Stackhouse, Professor of Christian Social Ethics and Stewardship at Andover Newton Theological School, believes that part of the answer to that question lies in modernity's response to the long-held notion of creation, and the assumption of creationists that God not only initiated creation, but continues to be active in it. "Christians, Jews, Muslims, most Hindus, and many followers of tribal religions believe in a Creator God on whom the world depends."[37] On the other hand, there are those who do not believe that God is active in creation, in fact, they even may not believe in God. But they too, have their presuppositions about the world and humanity that are as dogmatic as any of those held by creationists. Stackhouse has summarized the issue

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[36] *Ibid.*, xi.

[37] Max L. Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy: Christian Stewardship in Modern Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 18.

neatly:

> These presuppositions include the following: (1) that the world is an accident; (2) that life is a chance pattern that has a logic, if there is one at all, by mutations by material causes alone; (3) that humanity has no "quality of dignity" other than beasts do (except possibly a somewhat larger brain); (4) that the natural processes of change are disconnected from any divine purposes or principle; and (5) that religious belief is an outmoded, mythological way of trying to know how the world works, a way now displaced by science. The creationists disagree with the post-Darwinian reductionists, who presume (and demand the presumption from others) that there is neither a divine being, design, or intention of governing the universe nor any higher law for guiding life than that which can be found in the survival of particular gene pools by successful adaptation to changing material environments. Religion, culture, patterns of civilization, and questions of truth or justice are understood to be the adaptive constructs of species or subspecies groupings attempting to gain dominance over resources, territory, or reproductive capacity, while nature and its dynamic laws, empirically observed, are seen to be the only point of reference by which to judge what is true.[38]

Given such a positivistic philosophy, stewardship only makes sense if it ultimately advances the survival of the human species or advances the cause of one group over another in its strive for dominance. Similarly, responsibility and accountability, the twin pillars upon which biblical and pre-Enlightenment stewardship rested, only hold true for the same reason. Any notion that one is responsible and accountable to God for the use or abuse of resources whether they be material or human, has no place within a rigid empiricism.

One can carry the reductionism even further and recall the aphorism attributed to the Marquis de Sade (1740-1814), "Whatever is, is right."[39] The same philosopher,

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[38] *Ibid.*, 19.

[39] The quote is actually from Alexander Pope's (1688-1744) *magnum opus*, Essay On Man but the last line of the quote certainly comports with de Sade's philosophy when taken out of its original context:

> All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
> All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
> All discord, harmony not understood;

although generally not highly esteemed[40] by those who would classify themselves as products of Enlightenment, but who wish to attribute some humaneness to the human species, offered this final principle of his moral philosophy--a principle that could impact directly on one's concept of stewardship: "Benevolence has nothing to do with Nature, ... who never imbued us with any desire but that of satisfying ourselves at no matter what price."[41] "Egoism," it seems, "is Nature's fundamental commandment."[42]

De Sade's views are extreme to be sure, but they underscore the radical change, in a hyperbolic way, that stewardship underwent during modernity. In so many ways it was truncated. Whereas, prior to the Enlightenment, stewardship included just about every part of life including one's relationships within the household of God, by the turn of the twentieth century, the concept of *oikonomia* was restricted to financial matters. Stewardship came to be measured in currency and personal assets. This has had devastating consequences on the church in that the church has, by and large, forgotten what the biblical concept of stewardship is. In a work soon to be published, Ronald E. Vallet, former executive director of The Ecumenical Center for Stewardship Studies in the United States, expressed his fear of the church's loss of memory in this and other

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All partial evil, universal good;
And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.
Cited in *(Bartlett's Quotations*, ed. Christopher Morley, [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948], 207).

[40] See Peter Gay, *The Party of Humanity: Essays in the French Enlightenment*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1971), 285.

[41] The Marquis de Sade, cited in *The Norton History of Modern Europe*, gen. ed. Felix Gilbert (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1972), 640.

[42] *Ibid.*

areas:

> It is my judgment, based on my work and experience on the local, regional, national, and international scenes--both denominational and ecumenical--that the church has largely forgotten who it is, what it is called to do, and whose it is. It has become a household of amnesia. A divine reversal is needed if the church is to become the household of God that God intends.[43]

Vallet's use of the word "household" is intriguing. He has observed that the phrase "household of God" appears in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament (OT) alone more than 1,600 times.[44] He has further noted:

> Though not always recognized, the concept of "household" pervades Christian thought. The words "economy," "ecology," and "ecumenics" are related. "Economy" is simply a transliteration of *oikonomia* (stewardship, or household management) into the English alphabet. "Ecology" also is rooted in the Greek prefix, *oiko*. Literally, it means "one household." It has, of course, been given a more specialized meaning in and by the ecumenical movement. Thus, the three words usually associated with financial management, environmental concerns, and the ecumenical movement are all rooted in the concept of "household."[45]

The need to measure stewardship in terms of "treasure" was necessary to the extent that virtually all commodities and services were being valued in a similar manner. Moreover, the rapid expansion of foreign and home missionary work in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the establishment of para-church organizations from the mid-twentieth century to the present day, have required great infusions of liquid assets of which cash was the most convenient form. But, the reductionism could only go so far. The emergence of personal "time" and "talents" by the mid-twentieth century as a requirement of Christian stewardship was also being reflected in Christian writing and

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[43] Ronald E. Vallet, "Congregations at the Crossroads: Remembering to be Households of God (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, forthcoming July, 1998), ii.

[44] *Ibid.*, chap. 1:2

[45] *Ibid.*

even in the interpretations of hymnody. For instance, the hymn of Isaac Watts (1674-1748), "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," written in 1707,[46] speaks of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the inescapable necessity for the believer to devote all he/she is and has for the service of the Lord. As Watts has phrased it in the fourth stanza:

> Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a present far too small:
> Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul, my life, my all.[47]

Certainly, commitment (time and talents) is an integral part of stewardship, but at the time Watts penned these lines, stewardship as a theme was not considered: it was assumed. It was part and parcel of one's consecration to the Saviour and premised on the Lord's sacrificial death on the cross for his people. Money was not a major consideration in the hymn for few people had much of it. Churches in Watts's day primarily were supported financially by the wealthy. Bailey has noted the original meaning of the hymn:

> This hymn, written for use in the Communion Service, was inspired by Paul's impassioned declaration in Gal 6:14. As a climax to his argument that one does not have to become a Jew before he can become a Christian, and that the Law in which the Jew glories cannot possibly save anyone, Paul exclaims, "But far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified to me, and I unto the world."[48]

Even after nearly 300 years of existence, the hymn is still used widely in English-speaking churches when the Lord's Supper is observed. However, a different theological

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[46] A. E. Bailey, *The Gospel in Hymns* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), 49.

[47] Isaac Watts in *Praise*, ed. Norman Johnson (Grand Rapids: Singspiration Music, 1983), 224.

[48] Bailey, *The Gospel in Hymns*, 49.

emphasis is sometimes placed on it as well.[49] One sees this change as she/he observes the reinterpretation of hymns by later commentators.

The stanza beginning with the words, "Were the whole realm of nature mine," poetically expresses Watts's desire to render everything he is and has to Christ. Bailey, writing in the mid-twentieth century, has reinterpreted the stanza based on the Enlightenment concept of stewardship--a concept itself premised on the notion that everything is broken down into its indivisible components:

> This survey, this endeavour to assess the value of Christ's sacrifice, reaches a climax of personal resolve. Though man's sins through the ages are infinite in quantity, as large as the bulk of the material universe, Christ's atonement is adequate--and more. God therefore needs nothing from me in the way of further payment. Yet personal gratitude to Christ makes its own irresistible demand. Insignificant though I am, I can at least give myself, "my soul"--the essence of me that makes me an individual, "my life"--all the activities of my days, "my all"--whatever I possess of wealth and inward power.[50]

It appears that the very popular, three Ts--time, treasure, and talents were in Bailey's mind when he analyzed the hymn.

As the twentieth century passed, Europeans and North Americans became increasingly more conscious of the damage that pollution caused by industrial wastes, vehicle emissions, and other human activities was doing to the exosphere. Caroline Lockerbie, a minister in the Presbyterian Church of Canada, examined her own

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[49] "[T]he hymns a community sings transmit their experience, their values, their history from one generation to another. Each time a community stands to sing a hymn, it recreates its identity anew, carrying the past forward into the present but changing it slightly by shifting its meaning and intentions through present circumstances."
(Linda J. Clark, " `Songs My Mother Taught Me': Hymns as Transmitters of Faith," in *Beyond Establishment*, eds. Jackson W. Carroll and Wade Clark Roof [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993], 103).

[50] Bailey, *The Gospel in Hymns*, 50.

denomination's shortcomings respecting stewardship in her Doctor of Ministry thesis project:

> Initially, the elements of the created world were the sources of food, clothing, and shelter for the community. Once people began to leave farming and turn to crafts and other trades a means of exchange was developed to provide them with a source of food. Money became the means which ultimately led to our complicated system for exchange of goods and services. Very few of us continue to have direct access to the elements of the created world. The resource which has replaced it in the modern covenant community [the church] is money. We have more than money, though, to manage. Most of us grew up on the three "T"s of stewardship, time, talent, and treasure. For the '90s two "T"s have been added. They are trash and tissue. Trash brings in our ecological awareness, and tissue refers to body organs and blood. These too constitute resources of the created world.[51]

The three "T"s are now the five "T"s as the western Christian concept of stewardship moves ever closer to the "grand design" concept that dominated the church for most of its existence. As the Western World enters what is more and more being labeled "post-modernity" and leave the Enlightenment behind, not with a smug rejection, but as a paradigm whose force is spent, the all-inclusiveness of stewardship is taking hold in the thinking of Christians. It will, however, likely take another generation or two before it becomes the dominant view of stewardship.

One of the most prolific and readable authors on the "new" stewardship is Douglas John Hall. Although Hall used what he called a "theoanthropological" methodology its scope covers just about the entire gamut of theology including Christology, creation, ecclesiology, and eschatology to name several. Indeed, his purpose

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[51] Caroline R. Lockerbie, "One-Thirteen From Babylon: Stewardship as a Pathway to Restoration" (D.Min. thesis project, McMaster University, 1996), 136.

in using the term "theoanthropological"--a word coined by Karl Barth (1886-1968)[52]--appears to be all-inclusive in its range of meaning. Much of the remainder of this chapter will be spent discussing the theology of Hall as it relates to stewardship, for surely, he is one of the most influential and articulate thinkers in the area today.

The Theoanthropological Methodology of Douglas John Hall

Hall has eschewed the long-held western approach of formulating a theory then applying the theory to practice. Rather, he has opted for an approach articulated by Third World liberation theologians that centres more on praxis than on theory. He summed up his thinking on the distinction between the Western "theory-plus-practice"[53] and praxis approaches by quoting a discussion between North American and Latin American theologians:

> Thinking is not now considered prior or superior to action; rather, it takes place in action. The Christian religion was not founded on a word, but on the Word made Flesh. Faith is no longer "applied" or completed in action, but for its very understanding (and this is theology) faith demands that it be discovered in action. It is necessary to relate Christian theory and historical practice, faith and praxis. Some theologians are talking of a theology defined as critical reflection on historical praxis. Practice refers to any action that applies a particular theory. Praxis is practice associated with a total dynamics of historical vision and social

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[52] "Strictly speaking (wrote Barth)...the word 'theology' fails to exhaust the meaning of 'evangelical theology,' for one decisive dimension of the object of theology is not expressed clearly in it. This dimension is the free love of God that evokes the response of free love, his grace (*charis*) that calls for gratitude (*eucharistia*). 'Theoanthropology' would probably express better what is at stake here."
(Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology*, trans. Grover Foley [New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963], 12). Quoted in Hall, *The Steward*, 26-27.

[53] *Ibid.*, 12.

> transformation. Through praxis, people enter into their historical destiny. Since praxis changes the world as well as the actors it becomes the starting point for a clearer vision of God in history.[54]

While aware of the potential pitfalls of focusing on praxis, Hall, nonetheless, has adopted the methodology as his own, only he is careful to stress the necessity of reflection on praxis as well. Indeed, he went further, for Hall returned to biblical examples in order to explicate the metaphor of the steward. The biblical symbol of the steward has now become the framework around which Hall has constructed his arguments.

The All-Inclusiveness of Stewardship

"The steward is a particularly apt metaphor for humanity because it encapsulates the two sides of human relatedness, the relation to God on the one hand and to the nonhuman creatures of God on the other. The human being is, as God's steward, accountable to God and responsible for its fellow creatures."[55] Human beings are not autonomous, isolated creatures from the rest of creation, rather they are beings in relationship, first of all to God as Creator, Lord, Judge, Redeemer, and Saviour to list several aspects of that relationship, and then to the creation itself. Hall has looked to the

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[54] *Theology in the Americas*, eds. Sergio Torres and John Eagleson, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976), 435. Quoted in Hall, *The Steward*, 18-19.

[55] *Ibid.*, 26

OT for his metaphor of the steward. The steward is a servant but a "superior servant, a sort of supervisor or foreman, who must make decisions, give orders, and take charge."[56]

Inherent in the office are the qualities of accountability and responsibility--accountability to the owner of the resources who has entrusted and empowered the servant to administer them on behalf of the owner for his benefit, and responsibility for the care and wise use of those resources in order to maximize applicability. Hall cited several OT passages (e.g. Genesis 43 and 44; 1Chronicles 27 and 28), but the references from Daniel 1 with respect to the official delegated by King Nebuchadnezzar to oversee the training and dietary regimens of Daniel and his associates this writer finds to be illustrative of Hall's point. The official was not only accountable to the king for the outcome of the programme initiated for the young Hebrew captives, he was also sensitive to the needs of the captives themselves. Although the official himself was wary and fearful of the results of the experiment, it appears that he tacitly approved of the dietary diversion requested by Daniel and his friends and appointed a guard who would be sympathetic to the captives. The incident is related in Daniel 1:8-16:

> But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the royal rations of food and wine; so he asked the palace master to allow him not to defile himself. Now God allowed Daniel to receive favor and compassion from the palace master. The palace master said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king; he has appointed your food and your drink. If he should see you in poorer condition than the other young men of your own age, you would endanger my head with the king. Then Daniel asked the guard whom the palace master had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: "Please test your servants for ten days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. You can compare our appearance with the appearance of the young men who eat the royal rations, and deal with your servants according to what you observe." So he agreed to this proposal and

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[56] *Ibid.*, 32

> tested them for ten days. At the end of the ten days it was observed that they appeared better and fatter than all the young men who had been eating the royal rations. So the guard continued to withdraw their royal rations and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.[57]

To be sure it was the guard who showed some initiative and allowed the dietary experiment. Had it failed, the palace master could always have pointed an accusing finger at his underling but, as the guard's boss, he ultimately would have been accountable for the results. It seems that the palace master and the guard were not closed to the needs of the young men even if their motives were mixed, especially those of the guard. If Joyce Baldwin,[58] Dean of Women, Trinity College, Bristol, is correct in her analysis of the situation, the guard and his superior were willing to take a reasonable risk for the welfare of Daniel and his compatriots.

Hall is also careful to point out in a quote from Isaiah 22:15-21 that the steward is also "neither authoritative nor irreplaceable."[59] In the passage, the prophet denounced officials who used the power and authority of their offices for their own ends:

> Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: Come, go to this steward, to Shebna, who is the master of the household, and say to him: What right do you have here? Who are your relatives here that you have cut out a tomb here for yourself, cutting a

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[57] Daniel 1:8-16.

[58] "With the connivance of the chief eunuch [palace administrator] he [the guard] evidently substituted his own meals for the royal delicacies and benefited from the exchange, a point which ensured the secret would be kept.
(Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction & Commentary* [Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978], 84).

[59] One commentator compared part of the palace master's function to that of a senior administrator in a post secondary school when he wrote,
"[the] job seems to have been very like that of the principal, even dean of students, in a modern college."
(Ronald S. Wallace, *The Message of Daniel* [Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979], 40).

> tomb on the height, and carving a habitation for yourself in the rock?
> The LORD is about to hurl you away violently, my fellow. He will seize firm hold on you, whirl you round and round, and throw you like a ball into a wild land; there you shall die, and there your splendid chariots shall lie, O you disgrace to your master's house! I will thrust you from your office, and you will be pulled down from your post.
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> On that day I will call my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah, and will clothe him with your robe and bind your sash on him. I will commit your authority to his hand, and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.[60]

The steward may have occupied a position of importance[61] as Shebna no doubt did, but, when the steward failed in her/his duty or shirked responsibility, the master had every right to call that person to account.

But Hall also has a much more inclusive view of stewardship in mind. He cited the apostle Paul to demonstrate his point: "So let no one boast about human leaders. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the present world or life or death or the present or the future--all belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God."[62] He, then, offered this comment on the passage, which seems to summarize his outlook on the topic of stewardship: "This is perhaps the supreme ecumenical/ecological statement of the Bible. We are all bound up with one another. No one can claim or have claimed for her- or himself any independent dignity, authority, or worth. Even Jesus Christ is part of the chain of mutuality. Even Christ is accountable--

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[60] Isaiah 22: 15-21.

[61] Shebna is also referred to as "mayor of the palace," "minister," and "deputy." (Sir George Adam Smith, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. 1 [New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, n.d.], 330).

[62] 1 Corinthians 3:21-23.

he is God's steward."[63] In other words, Jesus is not only the Creator and Sustainer of all that is (Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-3), he is also "the initiator, and enabler of Christian stewardship."[64] Hall might have added that Jesus was the example, *par excellence*, of what it is to be a steward. Since believers are "in Christ," to use a favourite phrase of St. Paul, they, too, are to exemplify the wide-ranging implications of stewardship from being "those entrusted with the secret things of God"[65] to caring for the multitude of resources in whatever forms they take on planet earth and beyond.

The extension of the meaning of steward is not an unreasonable one, especially in an age when human activities can have such devastating consequences for lower orders of life and for the planet itself, not to mention the destructive impact on fellow human beings! This expanded concept of stewardship certainly captures the notion that there is no area in creation in which the heavenly Father does not have an interest and, as his stewards, the Christian's interest in them is obligatory.

Hall has extended the stewardship model well beyond anything previously considered in North American Christianity.[66] He has returned to something very much

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[63] Hall, *The Steward*, 36-37.

[64] *Ibid.*, 44.

[65] 1 Corinthians 4:1 *NIV*.

[66] Ironically, a major contribution that North American Christian theology has made to Christian theology as a whole, at least according to John Reumann, is in the area of stewardship:

> This thing called stewardship is very much a North American contribution to church practice and thought. Indeed, as Helge Brattgard points out in his book on the topic, one indication of the situation is the fact that many languages have no word for stewardship. In German, for example, the Luther Bible employs *Haushalterschaft* and, for "steward," *Haushalter* at Luke 16 and elsewhere. Unfortunately, in German those words have a menial, servile connotation (as indeed the Greek did at times). Accordingly there have been attempts in German Protestant circles to substitute *Treuhandlerschaft*, denoting the ability to be a faithful handler of God's gifts, or even to

like the classical concept of the grand design but, there is a marked difference. Under the grand design model, God was clearly in control. Human beings were more like actors assigned their roles and left to play them out. The end of the play was known. It was only the time when the final curtain would be drawn on human history that was in question. And even now, there is no shortage of speculation as to when that will take place. However, in Hall's understanding, the human steward, operating under the authority of God, has a much more critical role. Reality, if nothing else, has compelled people to see the effects that human activities have and will continue to have on earth, never mind outer space. It seems that the script is still being written, at least as far as humans are concerned, as time unfolds. This is much less comforting for a world seeking security and yet is only too well aware of the flaws of past performances.

Apotheosis, Apocalypse, or Accountability

In an age of angst and pessimism, Hall is refreshingly optimistic and passionate in his approach to humanity. Compellingly, he revealed the source of his optimism but also has gainsaid those who have a decidedly apocalyptic viewpoint concerning the ultimate fate of the world:

> It is this commitment [God's commitment to humanity] that binds me to

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create a word drawing on the English term, *die Stewardschiffe*. (Some may think it poetic justice that German has no word for this concept, since English-speaking theologians have borrowed so many technical terms from the German, but it points to how English or really American this concept is.) . Along with one other term from English for a major theological doctrine--"atonement"--stewardship is clearly a major contribution to the church universal. (Reumann, *Stewardship*, 52).

> "liberalism," and in this respect I have no regret whatsoever that I am sometimes identified as a "liberal"! For any faith that puts at its centre a God whose heart yearns for broken and suffering humanity cannot allow itself the luxuries of an untrammeled conventional theism! Let us recognize it once and for all: the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the One whom Jesus called "Abba"--this God is anthropocentric! There is something dreadfully ironic when, as has happened with such abysmal regularity in Christian history, people are exhorted in the name of Jesus Christ to embrace a faith in God that effectively insulates them from the pain of God's world![67]

Hall is certainly passionate in his convictions and, although optimistic about God's care and love for humanity, he cannot be classified as a utopian! He is very conscious of the problem of sin and its proclivity for perverting the best of intentions.

One of the consequences of the Enlightenment was to reshape the human creature into a god--a god who controls all resources but is accountable to no one for their use. This apotheosis has had and continues to have severe and sustained deleterious effects, not only on the environment but also in the area of human relations as well. Hall is surely right in very forcefully putting forth the symbol of the steward as the paradigm for the Christian to follow. Furthermore, he also is justified in censuring those who would abandon the world, whether it be expressed by *ge*, *kosmos*, or *oikonome*, when God has clearly placed humans in a position of trust and care for his creation (Genesis 1:26, 28-29; 2:15, 19-20).

But, has Hall gone too far? Has he set up a straw man in excoriating what he has portrayed as a more pietist view of heaven and earth where earth is ultimately expendable and really not worth bothering about? It is the view of this writer that he has. He did expose the failure of extreme Christian fundamentalism to address ecological, economic, and justice issues by hiding behind the notion, "this world is not my home," and the

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[67] Hall, *The Steward, 109.*

ultimate apocalypse expressed in such passages as 2 Peter 3:10-13 and Revelation 21:1. He is correct in critiquing a brand of Christianity that ignores human and ecological problems in which God himself has taken a keen interest if the creation, the incarnation, and the words and actions of our Lord recorded in the various stewardship pericopes[68] mean anything. Accountability is what motivates the steward whose world and whose own nature are still subject to the effects of the Fall and, who must appear before her/his Master and give an account of her/his stewardship. Hall certainly has emphasized that. That is one reason that the symbol of the steward is so powerful. However, in his zeal to promote universal stewardship, Hall has challenged the orthodox and historic Christian view that the Christian church has a commission to minister the gospel of Jesus Christ to every creature.

The Trend Toward Universalism

Biblical scholar John Reumann offered this rather incisive critique of Hall's views:

> Defined as Douglas John Hall would have it, stewardship is a biblical symbol that has come of age only in North America. Even the New Testament never quite got it right. It means care of the globe, together with all right-minded, ecologically inclined people, and correct political action for the future of society. The price for such a definition is to write off almost all church history and presumably most theologizing from Constantine the Great until contemporary liberation theology and seemingly give up evangelism, which converts people to Jesus Christ, as presumptuous. In Norden Murphy's phrase, "stewardship is the liberating

[68] See Matthew 13:1-9; Luke 11:1-10; 15:1-10; 15:11-32.

concept for the earth and the whole of its inhabitants."[69]

That may be an overstatement of the case but there exists within Hall's thinking a fundamental contempt for the modern missionary movement and its tendency to transplant Western cultural values into the cultures and societies wherein such ministries are being exercised. He attributed this attitude to the imperialism of the church modeled on the lines of Constantine the Great's Christianization of the Roman Empire. No doubt many of the criticisms are warranted but, just because the Western branches of the church have not always been sensitive to non-Western cultural values or, just because the Western church inadvertently, or even with eyes wide open, has provided economic interests with some form of theological justification for their rapacious behaviour in exploiting human and ecological resources, the church's stewardship of the whole gospel, including the call to "make disciples of all nations"[70] is not negated.

God, indeed, does have a definite bias toward humanity if John 3:16 is anything to go by. Or, to use Hall's dictum, "[T]his God is anthropocentric!" [71] Nonetheless, this God also has revealed a methodology for human beings to enter into relationship with him. That relationship is not something to be assumed, presumed, or deserved just because all of humanity happens to be members of that unique species entitled *homo sapiens*. Although D. J. Hall does not explicitly advocate a universalism whereby everyone will enter into a saving relationship with God, he seems to lean in that direction.

At the end of his book, *The Steward*, Hall has called for the church to demonstrate

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[69] Reumann, *Stewardship*, 63.

[70] Matthew 28:19.

[71] Hall, *The Steward*, 109.

its solidarity with the world as Christ did in his sacrificial death. He has gone beyond that. Mission in Hall's eyes, is now reduced to his concept of stewardship. Upon earning the right to be heard by a cynical world, Christians, then and only then, are in a position to present the reason for the hope that is within them:

> But sometimes the story, the reason, and the hope would be like a seed falling on fertile ground. And would this not be mission? And would it not be authentic mission, being the response to a question and not, as so much of what has called itself mission has been, answers to questions nobody asked. Being grounded in participation, in solidarity with the general human and earthly condition and not just another petty ideology vying for the souls of human beings; being attested by life and death and not just in pious words and gestures and rumours of miracles--would it not be mission?
>
> Yes, it would be mission. It would not be enormously successful, probably. It would not conquer the world. It would certainly not convert, baptize, confirm, marry, and bury everybody!
>
> But it would be enough.[72]

But would it? It certainly appears that Hall has equated stewardship with mission[73] but, in so doing he has fallen short of the gospel imperative. Christendom may be in its death throes. The imperialism of post-Constantinian Christianity is quickly receding into the annals of another age as the post-modern era, with its pluralism and secularism, takes an ever-firmer grip on the minds and hearts of those being prepared to lead humanity into the third millennium of our common era. The triumphalism of albeit disparate forms of North American Christianity so fervently held by modernist and fundamentalist alike at the beginning of the twentieth century, has given way to a less sanguine view of the ability of human nature to usher in the kingdom of God on the one

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[72] *Ibid.*, 258.

[73] The concept will be considered in more depth in the following chapter.

hand and, in the case of all but the most extreme fundamentalists, an increasing awareness that perhaps God is not through with us and planet Earth yet and he will not visit his creation with the horrific apocalypse outlined in the Revelation to St. John by the end of the twentieth century.

The paradigms that have influenced and informed the church for the past six centuries are undoubtedly being replaced by new models of which the symbol of the steward is one and a very important one at that. But the message of the gospel and the command to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you"[74] has not been rescinded. Stewardship is more than taking care of the planet and getting along with others important as these qualities are. It is not a synonym for mission. It is an outgrowth of mission and includes the various thrusts mission entails from being "stewards of God's mysteries"[75] that is, the good news of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, to being "good stewards of the manifold grace of God."[76] A steward may not necessarily be a Christian but a Christian is invariably a steward charged with the responsibility of ministering in the most effective manner, the good news of Christ and being responsible and accountable to God for the resources entrusted to her/his care.

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[74] Matthew 28:19-20.

[75] 1 Corinthians 4:1.

[76] 1 Peter 4:10.

Toward an Appropriate Definition of Christian Stewardship

There is no question that the concept of stewardship is currently undergoing a radical change as the post-modern paradigm takes root in North American thought and culture. What began as something that was inextricably linked with money was expanded as the limitations of economics, as understood in the modern or Enlightenment paradigm, became more evident in light of the Scripture's description and practice of stewardship. By the mid-twentieth century, the concepts of the Christian's talents and time were added to her/his treasure to form the three Ts so familiar to many of us who matured in faith in this period. By the last quarter of this century, two more Ts were added--trash and tissue--in an attempt to hold people accountable for the disposal and possible recycling of garbage and the gift of usable body parts for transplant upon the death of persons. The modernity paradigm as it related to stewardship was increasingly reformed and refined to try and encompass the ever-broadening concepts that were being thrust upon it. Notwithstanding the accretion of new meanings to the paradigm, it has become clear that it does not meet nor is it able to meet the biblical criteria for stewardship. The Enlightenment paradigm considers specific attributes. It is atomistic by its very nature. It asks the question, "What qualities does a steward possess to render that person a good steward?" The answers to that question will vary with the place and time in which the question is asked. In the mid-late nineteenth century, the major criterion was money (treasure), for it was money that fueled the exploding missionary enterprise and church expansion in North America. By the mid-twentieth century, time

and talents were added to treasure[77] as people acquired more leisure time and expanded educational opportunities. By the late 1960s, the environment also became an important factor as people realized that human beings could not keep polluting the Earth's eco-systems at exponential rates without endangering all forms of life. Moreover, with the ability of medical science to transplant human and animal tissues to other humans, the new industry of organ transplantation came into being. Now North Americans are being encouraged by provincial and state governments as well as the medical profession and persons who need organ transplants, to offer their organs for that purpose upon their respective demise. Because of the atomistic presuppositions of Enlightenment thought, the concepts of what it means to be a "good" steward have changed as needs within Christian communities and, indeed, the world have changed. But the old paradigm is always in a position of playing catch-up. It can never offer a comprehensive definition that will include new concepts or revive biblical insights in the communities where there is an attempt to wrestle seriously with the scriptural understanding of stewardship.

In this writer's view, Douglas John Hall has captured the essence of what it means to be a steward in seeing the ancient biblical household steward as a metaphor for the modern Christian steward. The notion that the steward is not the owner of the resources with which he/she works but is entrusted by the real Owner (God) to make the best and

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[77] John Reumann has cited *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, published in 1961 as an example of a definition of stewardship that captures this thinking:

> The aspect of religious life and church administration dealing with the individual's responsibility for sharing systematically and proportionately his time, talent, and material possessions in the service of God and for the benefit of all mankind.

Cited in (Reumann, *Stewardship*, 4).

most responsible use of them, realizing that there is a day of accounting for their use or abuse, is far closer in understanding to the stewardship parables uttered by Jesus and the notion of stewardship as articulated in the stories of Joseph[78] and of the palace steward[79] of King Nebuchadnezzar who was responsible for the well-being of Daniel and his comrades. Variations of this concept have existed from time immemorial. They have been known under a variety of descriptive words and phrases from stewardship (*oikonomia*) to the "grand design." They have encompassed several economic systems from the colonialism of the Roman Empire to the feudalism of the Middle Ages and the mercantilism of the early modern period. The biblical model even has survived the paradigm of modernity with its seductive reduction of stewardship to that which may be measured in dollars and cents, as people are becoming ever more aware that environmentally related activities have consequences for others and other things beyond themselves.

Any definition of Christian stewardship must include the twin attributes of accountability and responsibility and any Christian concept of stewardship must also encompass the notion that stewardship is playing a part in the "administration of the divine will"[80] to use Reumann's phrase. As he explicated the meaning of stewardship, Reumann had these thoughts:

> The somewhat unexpected biblical testimony is to *God's* stewardship, first and foremost, rather than ours. It is an economy of God, a plan of God, God's administration of the divine will, the work of God. It must be added, of course,

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[78] Genesis 37, 39-50.

[79] Daniel 1:3-21.

[80] Reumann, *Stewardship*, 118.

> that all such testimony, whether of Paul, Irenaeus, or some Old Testament prophet, is an assertion of faith, not a bald philosophical proposition, discernible to everyone.[81]

A scant three years after *Webster's* articulated the popular concept of stewardship as cited by Reumann, The Department of Stewardship and Benevolence of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. expanded the notion:

Christian stewardship:

- Recognizes all of life as a trust from God;
- Acknowledges that man's response is powered by the Holy Spirit;
- Involves Christians individually and corporately;
- Requires responsible management of all God-given resources; and
- Maintains that man should dedicate a worthy portion of his time,
- abilities, and money for the advancement of Christ's mission in the world through His Church.[82]

The definition of Christian stewardship thirty-four years ago is proximate to the concept that is fast becoming the norm of today. Some modification of the definition would be helpful. For instance, a more current definition should use inclusive language to satisfy current usage. The last three lines still reflect the notion of time, treasure, and talents. Any definition of stewardship must include the idea that all Christians are stewards of God's created and spiritual resources with which He has entrusted them, and that they as God's people--God's household, are responsible for the wise use of those

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[81] *Ibid.*, 118-119.

[82] *Ibid.*, 5.

resources and accountable to the One who made them. Such a description of Christian stewardship is as follows:

> Christian Stewardship Recognizes that all of life is a trust from God; Acknowledges that the Christian's response is powered by the Holy Spirit; Involves Christians individually and corporately; Requires responsible management of all God-given resources; and maintains that human beings, especially Christians, should dedicate all resources in their trust for the advancement of Christ's mission in the world through His Church, for the well-being of the human race, themselves, and creation.

The focus of this study is the Christian theological school, specifically stewardship in McMaster Divinity College and how that stewardship role has transpired in the relationship between the College and its chief constituency, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec and, indeed, to the world around it. The theological school too, is a creature of its time. Theological schools were initiated in response to a strong desire in the Christian community--in McMaster's case the Baptist community--as a vehicle to train clergy. But, the North American theological school is very much a creature of the Enlightenment paradigm and it too, no less than any other part of the church, has been influenced by the thought processes and assumptions that the Enlightenment model has generated. Even so, theological schools require a great deal of money to administer--faculty and staff to pay, building and equipment costs, students to train. One could argue while prayer and hard work are indispensible and basic to the survival of the theological school, it is money that fuels the administrative machinery of the institution. Suppliers will not accept any substitute and professors can live on faith alone only for so long.

On the other hand, seminaries must also be exemplary in their demonstration of stewardship principles. It is not likely that potential donors will be inspired to give generously to an organization that is not perceived to be using resources, particularly cash

resources, wisely. Nor will those who take their faith seriously be inclined to support an institution that they believe to be unfaithful to their trust in preparing men and women for ministry. The next two chapters will consider the *raison d'être* of the seminary and the relationship between McMaster Divinity College and the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec and the part that an expanded understanding of stewardship can play in that relationship.

CHAPTER 3

STEWARDSHIP AND THE SEMINARY

As one climbs the stairs leading to the foyer of McMaster Divinity College, a striking bronze plaque-sculpture affixed to the outside wall of the principal's office catches the eye. The plaque is a monument entitled "The Unknown Baptist Minister." A brochure[83] explaining the purpose of the commemorative art-piece explains that the piece is a memorial dedicated "to the host of almost forgotten ministers who by selfless devotion and godly labor brought the churches of the Canadian Baptist fellowship into existence during the formative years of Canadian history." The plaque depicts eight features of the pioneer Baptist minister's life and work: ordination, family life, pastoral visitation, administration of ordinances, teaching ministry, pulpit ministry, studies, and prayer life. In short, this sculpture-plaque captures the image of pastoral ministry that many people both inside and outside the church have even today, although the memorial represents the work of those who laboured over a century ago. But more to the point for the purposes of this thesis project, the sculpture captures in bronze the popular belief that a divinity school exists to train persons for the so-called "professional ministry" whether it be pastoral, chaplaincy, or foreign missionary service.

While to a large extent this is certainly true and will continue to be so for the

[83] "You Are Invited to Worship at McMaster Divinity College at the Nathaniel H. Parker Chapel in the Heart of McMaster University." n.d.

foreseeable future, the fact is that momentous changes are taking place both inside the church and its related institutions, such as theological schools, and in the world at large. It appears that the Western World is in the incipient stages of a universal paradigm shift in the way that it looks at truth and reality. No longer does the scientific rationalism of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on "objectivity" and empirical fact, prevail. No longer is the notion that any "truth," such as theological truth, that cannot be verified by sensual observation, is subject to dismissal and even derision because it does not meet the criteria of scientific objectivity. A much different notion of truth is now emerging and includes personal experience and intuition. The enormity of this shift in thinking is already being felt in the institutions that have been an integral part of our culture and lives for generations. Governments, educational institutions, even the church, are increasingly no longer the solely trusted authorities in a pluralistic and relativistic society. The church in particular is looked upon by many as bordering on the anachronistic--a throwback to an age long past and an institution out of touch with contemporary society. Yet rarely has there been an age in history when people are more keenly interested in spiritual matters.

Sociologists, such as Reginald Bibby of the University of Lethbridge, have observed the effects on the church of this shift in paradigm for nearly two decades. In his latest book, *There's Got To Be More*, Bibby offers this rationale for writing it: "Paradoxically, at a time when numbers and morale are frequently sagging, cultural conditions in Canada point to an increasing possibility: a great opportunity exists for the

country's churches both to grow and expand the scope of their ministries." [84]

Although he does not name the philosophy behind this shifting paradigm, Bibby does document its effects in those institutions such as the church that are seemingly enmeshed in the Enlightenment paradigm and the vastly changed attitudes and thinking of contemporary society.

Prof. Bibby's findings are certainly corroborated by those who are in pastoral service. The Rev. L. E. (Ted) Siverns, a Presbyterian minister in eastern Ontario, has related his experience in trying to help his denomination, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, recognize and respond to the changes taking place in Canadian society by meeting the needs of the churches to help them in their mission rather than restructuring to serve the denomination's favoured projects:

> When as a brief but recent part of our national staff I raised the question about what a denominational office should be doing these days, the question fell on angry ears. There was no lynching but it was obvious that it was something like first choice. When I asked about the purpose of restructuring, the question was received with a mixture of incomprehension, incredulity, and embarrassment. When I later suggested that the new structure would cost more than the old, I met strong denial and was chastised for being uncooperative.[85]

As one reads that, one almost hears the reshuffling of the deck furniture moments before the RMS Titanic was about to sink.

The implications for the seminary cannot be overstated. Its very survival will depend upon its ability to train and prepare men and women adequately for ministry in an age that no longer is locked into the old paradigm. This is particularly true for

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[84] Reginald Bibby, *There's Got To Be More: Connecting Churches and Canadians* (Winfield, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1995), 8.

[85] L. E. Siverns, "A Pastor Views Denominational Missions," *Journal of Stewardship* 46 (1994), 42.

denominationally funded schools like McMaster Divinity College which, for most of its existence, has been one of two university-related institutions extant in Canada founded primarily for the training of Baptist clergy serving churches in the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, the Union of French Baptist Churches in Canada, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, and the Baptist Union of Western Canada. As denominational influence decreases as appears to be happening now in most mainline churches--it certainly is true within the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec (BCOQ)--seminaries will undoubtedly need financial support from other than their traditional sources. Not only that, a much wider concept of stewardship currently emerging in theology will need to be examined, taught, and practiced in order to address the changes taking place in the paradigm shift. For as will be seen later in this chapter, the modern theological school is very much a creature of the Enlightenment paradigm. But it is also an institution whose roots are ancient and venerable, and given that the Christian faith historically has placed a high value on training its leaders, the influence of the religious seminary will likely continue to be supported by the Christian constituency **but only if it is seen to be relevant**. Relevancy will in part depend not only on how the seminary uses the resources entrusted to it, but also on the cogency of its understanding and practice of how Christians should handle the resources entrusted to them. In other words, the seminary will need to have a theology and a praxis of stewardship true to the gospel and God's mission for the church, and that also speaks to the needs of the individual Christian, the church, and of creation itself.

The issue of stewardship in the seminary will be addressed by examining briefly the paradigm shift that is currently happening, the changing concept of stewardship

within that shift, and the theological school as both a modern and ancient institution.

What Is Happening in the Real World? A Shift in Philosophical Paradigm

The Enlightenment and its Effects

Rarely do humans have the opportunity to live through a major paradigm shift in the way people think. However, such a change is currently underway in the late twentieth century. It is true, of course, that change is always taking place. Nothing remains as it was nor will it be as it is now. But the manner in which people perceive truth in Western civilization is now undergoing such a radical transformation as to justify calling it a new paradigm. The old paradigm based on the rationalism of the eighteenth century Enlightenment and more fully explicated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been found wanting by many in the contemporary world. In what is now becoming a classic in the field of missiology, South African missiologist, David J. Bosch (d.1992), has outlined seven features of the Enlightenment that have undergirded this mode of thinking for the last two and one-half centuries:

1. The human mind is the "indubitable point of departure for all knowing."
2. Because rationalism operated on a *subject-object scheme*, the effect was to separate

humans "from their environment and enable them to examine the animal and mineral world from the vantage-point of scientific objectivity."

3. Purpose is eliminated from science. That is, there is no teleological goal to science and history. Direct causality is the clue to the understanding of reality.
4. There is a belief in the inexorability of progress.
5. Scientific knowledge is factual, value-free, and neutral.
6. All problems are in principle solvable.
7. People are emancipated, autonomous individuals.[86]

Bosch made a trenchant observation with respect to the impact of the Enlightenment on Western culture. "What distinguishes our culture from all other cultures that have preceded it, then, is that it is, in its public philosophy, atheist."[87] It is a jarring if not paradoxical comment in that God is invariably called upon in times of war and other national crises. Moreover, how does it square with the fact that the world's only remaining superpower, the United States of America--the first nation in the world founded upon, nursed in, and still the bastion of Enlightenment philosophy--has stamped on its coinage, "In God We Trust?" It seems incongruous to be sure, but Bosch has a point. Christian theology in the West has become an inextricable part of Enlightenment culture and to a greater or lesser degree, passed a divine blessing on it. Certainly in North America and Great Britain, that is the case and it is reflected in the most fundamental public institutions. The national anthems of both Canada and Great Britain refer to God in the first stanzas. Although not the national anthem of the U.S., God Bless

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[86] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 264-67.

[87] *Ibid.*, 268

America is a national song--more than a song, it is a national hymn and it evokes a sense of divine presence and blessing in the minds and hearts of millions who sing it. The song echoes what millions of Americans believe, namely that the words of the Psalmist expressed in Psalm 32:12,

> Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance.[88]

applies as much to them as it did to the Israel of the Psalmist's day.

Canada has its own motto taken from the Psalms. Beneath the Canadian coat of arms are the words written in Latin, *A Mari Usque Ad Mare* -- From Sea to Sea, a phrase taken from Psalm 72:8,

> He [God] shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.[89]

The preamble to the Canadian constitution (a constitution is an Enlightenment-inspired document if ever there was one) refers to the primacy of God in the nation's affairs.

The writer has a commissioning scroll hanging on the wall in his office that begins:

> ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God of The United Kingdom, Canada and Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith...

Every commissioned officer in the British Commonwealth of Nations whose country acknowledges the British Sovereign as its own has a similar preface on his/her scroll. But what do all these references to God mean? For all intents and purposes there

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[88] Psalm 32:12 (*NIV*).

[89] Psalm 72:8 (*KJV*).

is little meaning. God may be referred to in daily U.S. Senate or Canadian House of Commons prayers, but few expect God's input into the debates, let alone proposed legislation. As Bosch has shown, one of the ways in which the church responded to the "challenge of the supremacy of reason was to *embrace the secular society*."[90] He sums up this thought that encapsulates the thinking of several leading theologians a generation ago--a generation whose commitment at that time to the Enlightenment ideal was total:

> Humans have now come of age and should, in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's words, act "as if there was no God" (*etsi Deus non daretur*). A catalytic event in this regard seems to have been the World Student Christian Federation conference held in Strasbourg in 1960 where Johannes Hoekendijk urged participants to begin radically to desacralize the church and ecclesiastical activities. North American theologians began to espouse a theology of the "death of God" [*sic*]. D. L. Munby in *The Idea of a Secular Society* (1963) stated that it was the particular glory of Western Christianity to have permitted the development of a society which explicitly refused to commit itself to any particular view. Arend van Leeuwen in *Christianity and World History* (1964) suggested that secularization, which was inspired by the gospel, was the wave of the future. Harvey Cox baptized the secular society in *The Secular City*. Many others joined the chorus. This response was, in a sense, a modern updating of seventeenth century Deism which, using the classical illustration of God as a clock-maker, stated that God gave the world its initial impetus and then left it to run its course.[91]

Although the Enlightenment was not atheistic in theory--God was allowed to be the Creator of the universe (the celestial clock-maker)--it was in practice. God was not allowed to interfere in Creation by doing something irrational like performing miracles. In a very real way, the "death of God" movement in the 1960s marked the death of the Enlightenment god. In fact, Thomas J. J. Altizer of Emory University, Atlanta, and William Hamilton, Professor of Theology at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School,

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[90] *Ibid.*, 270.

[91] *Ibid.*

Rochester, NY and two leading exponents of the "death of God theology," went further and suggested that the old social and religious order in the West that was so long dominated by the Christian Church, was in its death throes:

> A theology that chooses to meet our time, a theology that accepts the destiny of history, must first assess the theological significance of the death of God. We must realize that the death of God is an historical event, that God has died in our cosmos, in our history, in our *Existenz*. While there is no immediate necessity in assuming that the God who has died is the God of "faith," there is no escaping the inevitable consequence that the dead God is not the God of idolatry, or false piety, or "religion," but rather the God of the historic Christian Church, and beyond the Church, of Christendom at large. Why, it may be asked, is it necessary to link in this manner the Church with Christendom? Because when the Church entered the Hellenistic world, and later helped create the world of the modern West, it became indissoluably linked with a particular historical tradition.[92]

The comment raises a number of questions, not the least of which is the knowability of God, but the point is well taken. The "God" of the Enlightenment is no more.

Philosophically, rationalism had just about run its course. It was increasingly being challenged within the scientific community itself in the writings of the philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996), who authored *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*[93], a work that advocated the legitimacy of intuition in the process of scientific discovery. And there was a reawakening in matters spiritual with the rise of the "Jesus People Movement"[94] among young people; more awareness of other religions,

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[92] Thomas J. J. Altizer and William Hamilton, *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, (Indianapolis, New York, Kansas City: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1966), 11-12.

[93] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[94]David Di Sabatino, a Master of Theological Studies student at McMaster Divinity College, described the "Jesus People Movement" in the following manner:

particularly Eastern mysticism as popularized by the Beatles and other entertainers; as well as a surge of interest in the so-called "New Age" movements. Many of the young people who were converted to or reaffirmed their faith in Christ under the aegis of the "Jesus Movement" found it very difficult to ally themselves with mainline churches because most of these churches were locked into an Enlightenment mindset just when the young people were beginning to break away from it. In some respects, these people were the harbingers of the paradigm shift that was already underway and would take hold a generation later.

Bosch[95] also has enumerated several other features of the Enlightenment that still hold sway in many Christian churches and seminaries today. Reason became the dominant factor in Christian theology. In some quarters, it took precedence even over faith. A logical conclusion, following Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), was to divorce religion from reason completely.

Faith under this regime became a matter beyond the reach of the empirical and therefore not subject to the same rational scrutiny applied to data discerned by the physical senses. Religion was also privatized in that it became an individual's own business and not a matter of state policy. If a person was a member of one of the

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The Jesus People Movement is best understood as a seven year revival (occurring between 1967 and 1973) which dynamically affected the lives of many North American youth as they converted to Christianity through belief in Jesus Christ. The Jesus People witnessed daily supernatural interventions similar to those outlined in the book of Acts, believing that this unique period of 'revival' was a direct manifestation of 'God's hand' in history through the power of the Holy Spirit. While many were 'added to the church daily,' the movement's most tangible impact has been to provide Evangelical renewal within the body of the contemporary church through the development and continuance of a number of current evangelical institutions.
(David Di Sabatino, "The Jesus People Movement: Counterculture Revival and Evangelical Renewal" [MTS thesis, McMaster University, 1994], 14).

[95] *Ibid.*, 269-70.

Dissenting churches in Great Britain or if one was a Protestant in France in the eighteenth century the appeal of the privacy of religion would be quite alluring!

Religious seminaries in the nineteenth century joined the Enlightenment paradigm by declaring that "*theology itself* [is] *a science,* in the Enlightenment sense of the term.[96] A number of Princeton theologians declared that "theology was 'the science of God', 'the greatest of the sciences', 'the science of the sciences', superior, precisely as science, to any other science."[97] Interestingly, the Princeton theologians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as represented by Charles Hodge (1797-1878), A. A. Hodge (1823-1886), B. B. Warfield (1851-1921), and J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937), were eloquent and articulate spokespeople for the plenary and verbal inspiration of the scriptures. Moreover, they saw no contradiction between science and Christianity as Mark Noll of Wheaton College has demonstrated in reprinting this article written by A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield in *The Presbyterian Review,* 6 (1881):

> It is true that the Scriptures were not designed to teach philosophy, science, or ethnology, or human history as such, and therefore they are not to be studied primarily as sources of information on these subjects. Yet all these elements are unavoidably incidentally involved in the statements of Scripture. Many of these, because of the defective knowledge or interpretation on our part, present points of apparent confusion or error. Yet the outstanding fact is that the general conformableness of the sacred books to modern knowledge in all these departments is purely miraculous. If these books, which originated in an obscure province of the ancient world, be compared with the most enlightened cosmogonies, or philosophies, or histories of the same or immediately subsequent centuries, their comparative freedom, even from apparent error, is amazing. Who prevented the sacred writers from falling into the wholesale and radical mistakes which were necessarily incidental to their position as mere men? The fact that at this date scientists of the rank of Faraday and Henry, of Dana, of Guyot, and Dawson maintain that there is no real conflict between the really ascertained facts

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[96] *Ibid.*, 269.

[97] *Ibid.*, 270.

> of science, and the first two chapters of Genesis rightly interpreted, of itself demonstrates that a supernatural intelligence must have directed the writing of those chapters. This, of course, *proves that the scientific element of Scripture, as well as the doctrinal, was within the scope of Inspiration* (italics mine). And this argument is every day acquiring greater force from the results of the critical study of Scripture, and from advanced knowledge in every department of history and science, which continually tend to solve difficulties and to lessen the number of apparent discrepancies.[98]

The authors were sanguine about their perception of what they saw as the growing compatibility between Christianity and science. Ironically, they could not imagine that their writings on the inspiration of scripture would be used as an instrument to widen the cleavage between a later generation of evangelical Christians and the growing logical positivism that came to dominate twentieth century science.

Finally, Christianity attempted to establish a hegemony by creating a "Christian society." Christianity would be the official religion and government policy would reflect Christian beliefs and practices. Although successful in maintaining a religious hegemony for nearly two centuries in North America, it increasingly has become a hollow, eviscerated Christianity. It has, to use St. Paul's apt phrase, "a form of godliness but denies its power."[99] The form exists and until recently, most have conformed to or have paid lip service to its mores. That is no longer the case.

Despite this trend there is a concerted effort to regain a Christian hegemony. A current illustration of this phenomenon may be seen in the rise of the so-called "religious right" in the U. S. A. and Canada. The American version is attempting to influence national policy and morality by aligning itself with the Republican Party and bringing

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[98] Mark A. Noll, ed., *The Princeton Defense of Verbal Inspiration*, (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1988), 54.

[99] 2 Timothy 3:5.

pressure to bear on Republican Congressmen/women and Senators. The Canadian brand of the "religious right," on the other hand, has coalesced around the recently formed Reform Party--a party led by an avowed evangelical and includes many fundamentalists. The Reform Party platform not only encompasses the notion that governments need to become more active in promoting moral values through a Christian hegemony of political power, but it also stresses the responsibility of the individual to look after himself/herself with as little government support or interference in private affairs as possible. It is one of the curious anomalies of Enlightenment thinking.

Post-modernism

It is one thing to describe a paradigm that has been part of Western society for centuries. There is so much written about the Enlightenment. Its precepts have been hammered into every child and adult almost from the time a person is born. Anyone of the writer's generation who has completed secondary school knows about the "objectivity" of scientific data and the absolute necessity of the separation of church and state. However, it is quite a different matter to label a paradigm shift in the making. One name to describe this shift that keeps arising is "Post-modernism." Whether that label sticks or not will be decided by future historians. For the purposes of this paper the author will use "Post-modernism[100]" as a descriptive hook upon which to hang his

[100] Stanley J. Grenz, Pioneer McDonald Professor of Baptist Heritage, Theology, and Ethics, Carey Theological College, and Professor of Theology at Regent College, Vancouver, has written these comments on "Post-Modernism:

understanding of what is taking place.

What are the features of "post-modernism" and what possible ramifications may these changes have on the church and the theological school? One of the premier challenges to Enlightenment thought was articulated by the philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn, a generation ago. In summing up the work of Kuhn and others writing even earlier, David Bosch has offered these perceptive comments:

> In all these views scientific theory, history, sociology, and hermeneutics go hand in hand. A new vision is emerging, and it affects *all* the sciences, both human and natural. [Jurgen] Habermas contends that, in addition to the Enlightenment's "instrumental" reason, we should create room for what he calls "communicative" reason. And Kuhn argues that scientific knowledge is not the outcome of objective, "instrumental" or "mechanistic" research but the product of historical circumstances and of intersubjective communication. *In this way he challenges the Enlightenment's thesis of the priority of thought to being and of reason to action* [emphasis mine].[101]

In one stroke, several other assumptions of Enlightenment thought are challenged as well. If knowledge is the "product of historical circumstances and of intersubjective communication," as Kuhn and others have argued, then it can be inferred that although human beings are individuals they are not autonomous individuals. That is, they are not isolated in their thinking or their actions. What they think is contingent on where they are in a sociological, political, and historical context. They are impacted by what has

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> Scholars disagree among themselves as to what postmodernism involves, but they have reached a consensus on one point: this phenomenon marks the end of a single, universal worldview. The postmodern ethos resists unified, all-encompassing, and universally valid explanations. It replaces these with a respect for difference and a celebration of the local and particular at the expense of the universal. Postmodernism likewise entails a rejection of the emphasis on rational discovery through the scientific method, which provided the intellectual foundation for the modern attempt to construct a better world. At its foundation, then, the postmodern outlook is anti-modern.

(Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, [Grand Rapids, Michigan; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996], 11-12).

[101] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 351.

gone on before and by what is taking place at the time they are thinking.

This change in thought is having and will continue to have profound and lasting implications on the church and its related institutions. The spiritual is no longer confined to a "second story" or numinous realm to which it was consigned by Kantian logic. It is part of everyday experience. The spiritual, especially in the form of the supernatural, also has become popular if the TV schedule is any indication. Witness programmes such as "The X Files" and others dealing with supernatural phenomena. It is interesting to view the very popular "X Files" and compare the detectives in that show with detectives of another era--Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, for example. The leading characters in the "X Files are a female medical doctor and a male FBI agent who seem to bump into the supernatural on a regular basis. Deductive logic is used to solve cases to be sure, but the supernatural is very much a part of existence. There is no attempt to explain it away. On the other hand, Sherlock Holmes always solved his cases, much to the amazement of his medical doctor friend and associate, Dr. Watson, through the rigorous use of deductive logic. "Elementary, my dear Watson" was the lead-in to an almost painstakingly minute reasoning process used to solve the crime. The clues were inevitably tangible or explained by people's actions. Paradoxically, Holmes's creator was a practicing Spiritist who firmly believed that the supernatural was very much a part of life. Never, however, would he allow the supernatural to cloud the thoughts of his famous detective. Conan Doyle was too much the Enlightenment man for that! It seems to this writer that these two popular forms of entertainment, each one from a different era, capture something of the mindsets of their respective ages.

That change in mindset is much greater than detectives solving heinous crimes. It

extends to every area of life. One of the major assumptions of the post-modern paradigm is that virtually everything is interrelated. That is, creation is so complex and each component so inextricably connected with the other that the actions of one part will have repercussions on another, seemingly-unrelated part. Chopping down vast tracts of the Amazon rain forest, for example, undoubtedly will affect millions of human beings and other forms of life that may exist thousands of miles away. That insight has compelled theologians to take a fresh look at Creation. What has emerged from their studies is at once an expanded concept of stewardship and a revisitation to the pre-Enlightenment notion of that subject. A brief review of formerly and to some extent, presently held views of stewardship follows. Moreover, the emerging trends in stewardship will be considered as well.

Stewardship

A Brief History

In order to understand better the emergence of stewardship as an increasingly more important theme in theology, a brief survey of the major concepts of stewardship that have prevailed in the western church will be undertaken.

As has been seen in the previous chapter, the concept that dominated the church in various forms for most of its existence has been labeled the "grand design of God" by C. A. Patrides (1930-1986), Professor of English at the University of Michigan and Milton scholar, and adopted by The American Lutheran biblical scholar, John Reumann. The "grand design" is premised on the notion that "God [is the] 'administrator' managing the affairs of human beings and the whole universe in such a way as to fit the divine design and will."[102] In short, everything has its purpose and there is a purpose for everything. The concept was greatly influenced by the Greek idea of the household steward (*oikonomos*) and to a lesser extent, the ancient Hebrew understanding of the similar function. God is the Ruler of the Divine Economy, that is, all of creation. God's human creatures are assigned roles as stewards to fulfill the purposes for which they were created. It is a notion firmly rooted in the cultures of the ancient Mediterranean world, but very foreign to the modern North American culture. Sociologist John J. Pilch offers this insight into the culture of biblical times.

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[102] Reumann, *Stewardship & The Economy of God*, 15.

> The central or core value of our Mediterranean ancestors in the faith is "interpersonal contentment." This value dictates that people should be content with what they have and not worry about getting ahead of others, achieving more than others, or being better than others. This, in fact, is what Mediterranean people are "anxious" about: not to infringe on others, and not to allow others to infringe on them.
> Such anxiety revolves especially around the value feeling of "honor" and "shame." Whatever the status into which a person is born is "honorable" and must be maintained throughout life. Indeed, being born into honor is the chief way of getting it.[103]

The household steward was invariably a slave. It did not matter his level of intelligence or his native abilities. He could be responsible for running a large estate with hundreds of other slaves under his control. He was, nevertheless, still a slave whose status could only be altered by his owner.

In the Middle Ages too, one's purpose also included the social class into which one was born. A person, at least in theory, was not to use his/her God-given talents to advance to a higher social plane. The "grand design" scheme fitted the feudal system very nicely, yet it has been remarkably durable. Even after the onslaught of the Enlightenment with its resulting emphasis on individual rights, especially the idea that a person ought to be able to advance as far as talent will allow, the "grand design" concept has not been eliminated. Indeed, it or at least a modified version of it, seems to be making something of a comeback as humans approach the third millennium of the current era.

The Enlightenment also resulted in the disestablishment of churches in North America, first in the former Thirteen Colonies after the American Revolution and then in

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[103] John J. Pilch, *Introducing The Cultural Context of The Old Testament*, (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1991), 52.

what is now Canada by the middle of the nineteenth century. For the first time since the establishment of Christianity as a legal religion by Constantine the Great, *all* churches in a state founded by Europeans had to raise funds in order to support their ministries fully. No one state church would be officially favoured over other sects in the country. The principle of voluntarism[104] had come to fruition on a national scale. That, coupled with the rise of the missionary movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the multitude of so-called para-church organizations after World War II, compelled church leaders to look seriously at fund raising. And that is exactly what stewardship has meant for the past two hundred years or so, fund raising. Ronald E. Vallet has summarized this thought:

> In seminary, stewardship was presented within the context of church administration. In short, it was related to the raising of funds to underwrite the church's budget and the recruitment of volunteers to fill the various offices and positions in the church's organizational structure. Rarely was stewardship related to theological considerations. Lip service was given to such statements as, "We give because God first gave to us," but there was no serious wrestling with stewardship as a biblical and theological concept. Stewardship was something one did; it was not a matter of identity for the Christian.[105]

Lately, other forces have been at work to force Christians to wrestle "with

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[104] William H. Brackney has examined the word "voluntary" and its cognates in a variety of contexts:

> Terms like "voluntaryism," "voluntarism," "volunteerism," appear in a wide variety of literature, consequently there is a need to define terms. "Voluntary" basically means to proceed from the will or from one's own choice or full consent. In the Latin it conveys the idea of a strong wish or command; for the Romans it was connected with good will or benevolence. In German voluntary is connected with "*wille*," meaning "firm intention, a determination to influence by one's will." In philosophical discourse, the correct term is *voluntarism*; in charitable and ecclesiastical use, it is *voluntaryism*. Because the religious and charitable form of the word is now mostly archaic, it is appropriate to use the term "voluntarism" generally, although many British writers prefer the older form.

(Brackney, *Christian Voluntarism in Britain and North America, 1).*

[105] Ronald E. Vallet, *Stepping Stones of the Steward* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 1-2.

stewardship as a biblical and theological concept." A series of large scale crises, caused by human cupidity and ignorance of consequences have given fresh credence to an old belief reflected in most cultures around the world: what we do individually and corporately affects the created world around us and, in the long run, human well being as part of that creation. It is to an expanded notion of stewardship that the discussion now turns.

The Model, the Direction

Biblical scholar John Reumann has traced the development of stewardship in North America and has divided it into two categories. The first is the "time, treasure, and talents" trio (hereafter referred to as the 3Ts) with which that continent's churchgoers are so familiar. The second is far more profound and wide-ranging. As Reumann has colourfully phrased it:

> As "stewardshipologists" pushed beyond old issues such as whether to use single-pocket collection envelopes or the two- or three-pocket varieties, toward what they hoped would be a "theology of stewardship," they began to claim that *everything* in Christian belief and practice belonged under stewardship. Their concerns became as broad as systematic theology, as wide-ranging as social ethics. At times it has seemed that the students of stewardship would produce a literature as broad in scope as Barth's *Church Dogmatics* or the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.[106]

While Reumann may have engaged in a little tongue-in-cheek hyperbole, he has pointed out the trend toward a more fully developed concept of stewardship based on a

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[106] Reumann, *Stewardship & The Economy of God*, 3.

theologically informed hermeneutic. The old 3Ts notion of stewardship that admittedly resulted in funding churches, seminaries, and missions for several generations, is inadequate in our day when more than money and personal resources are required to meet the needs of the world around us. Indeed, stewardship under that regime was often a response to a declared need rather than living a lifestyle governed by the notion that we are stewards of everything to do with our beings and accountable to the Creator of our lives. Stewardship is as much an attitude and lifestyle as anything else and, for the Christian, is informed by the Bible.

The breakdown of the modernity stewardship model of the 3Ts is clearly evident. Ronald E. Vallet and Charles E. Zech have charted the decline in their work, *The Mainline Church's Funding Crisis.* In their conclusion the authors have put their prophetic finger on the problem faced by many of the mainline churches in North America:

> God has used mainline denominations effectively in the past. Yet, today they are in a state of exile--bound by the culture of modernity. If they are to become the household of Jesus Christ, they will have to forsake the false gods conjured up by the logic of the market society of modernity and turn again to the living God whose servants they claim to be.[107]

One false god that seems to inhabit almost every denominational headquarters in the U. S. A. and Canada is what may be referred to as "the bottom line mentality." Mission is determined by how much income was received the previous year and, of course, by the political infighting that goes on to protect pet projects or even expand them. This worked to some degree when sources of funds appeared to increase with each

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[107] Ronald E. Vallet and Charles E. Zech, *The Mainline Church's Funding Crisis*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 164.

successive year but its shortcomings were soon discovered when income dropped. Mission work was cut back as a greater share of the funds were used to support the denominational bureaucracies. Vision was superseded by a 'hold the fort' ethos and the downward spiral in membership givings accelerated[108]. "Where there is no vision", the compilers of Proverbs remind us, "the people perish."[109] So do denominations and, the author should add, seminaries. As Vallet, Zech, and others point out, what is needed is a fresh look at stewardship and the Christian as steward.

An integral part of this resurgence in the study of stewardship is a renewed interest in what the Scriptures have to say about the subject, coupled with a desire to forge a strong, theologically informed hermeneutic. The old "proof text" approach, so often associated with the 3Ts, is an exhortation to, not a reason for, parting with one's cash. Douglas John Hall has been in the forefront in raising the need to focus on a more biblical model of the Christian steward. His books such as *Imaging God, The Steward*, and *The Stewardship of Life in the Kingdom of Death*, have done much to compel Christian leaders in North America to consider at least going beyond the 3Ts concept of stewardship. In *Imaging God*, Hall challenged the close relationship of contemporary Evangelical Christian culture with the prevailing societal culture in North America : "The 'Jesus Christ' of evangelicalism is a cultic symbol enshrining and legitimating the

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[108] Vallet and Zech have made this observation as well:

> Many persons feel that denominational structures and institutions have taken on a life and significance of their own, with denominational survival and maintenance being the main agenda of denominational leaders. Personal careers, salaries, and advancement become the driving forces. The nature of ministry is no longer seen as self-sacrificing. The perception is that power has moved from those with vision to those with a managerial mindset and motivation and that the theology of the denomination is agenda-driven.

(*Ibid., 70).*

[109] Proverbs 29:18 (*KJV*).

political hubris of Superpower."[110] It is a provocative statement and one that should not be limited to the Evangelicals, for those of us in the mainline churches (the writer counts himself in both camps) have profited substantially from the mostly cozy relationship the Christian church of all stripes has had with the civil authorities. It is nice to be "on top of the world," to be "number one," to enjoy the economic and social status of living in countries that are the envy of the world. But wearing the prophet's mantle has never been an easy role and Hall is quite right to tell Christians that, if they are going to be true stewards of God's creation, they will need to take on the roles of ecology critic, social commentator, and advocate for the poor and the oppressed even if it means confronting the very powers that have helped to make life pleasant for us. Moreover, it will need to be done with grace and humility, qualities that are so often missing when people with opposing views meet to debate the issues.

In an article entitled, "Mission as a Function of Stewardship," Hall advocated that "stewardship in its very essence contains a polemic against the whole idea of possession"[111]--a thought that one of his disciples, Christopher Levan, developed more fully in his work, *The Dancing Steward.* Levan considered the role possessions play in stewardship. He has woven his argument around the encounter that a wealthy town ruler[112] had with Jesus. "Good master, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" asked the man. The Lord told him that he must give his wealth to the poor and follow

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[110] Douglas John Hall, *Imaging God*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 17.

[111] Douglas John Hall, "Mission As a Function of Stewardship" in *Spotlighting Stewardship*, ed. W. D. Goodger, (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1981), 26.

[112] Matthew 19: 16-30.

him. It was too much to ask. For as Matthew's Gospel records: "When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth." In his explication of the text, Levan said: "Jesus was definitely claiming that material possessions are a dead end on the road to the realm of God. Read my lips: 'You must give everything away you possess.'"[113]

From there Levan moved on to develop what he called a theology of relinquishment. He illustrated this theology by citing the story of the Lord sending out the disciples into the towns and villages in Galilee. They were to take no money or food. They were to depend on the hospitality of the people to whom they were to minister and, in the process, demonstrate their absolute dependence on God to provide for their needs. Levan's point is that relinquishment means letting go. The steward is one who is utterly dependent on his/her master and the steward is one who owns nothing. It is an extremely difficult concept for people reared in the West to grasp let alone practice, for the entire economy is geared to enable people to amass as many goods as they are able. Identities are wrapped up in possessions, including education. From the time people are small children, it is drummed into them that poverty means unhappiness and wealth is a path to happiness. They soon learn that the poor are marginalized in Western culture. It is a fate almost worse than death.

One of the difficulties of financial stewardship is found in this very area. "People won't give away what they possess because they are literally giving away who they are

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[113] Christopher Levan, *The Dancing Steward*, (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1993), 21.

and the possibility of what they might become."[114] They are what they own. A popular bumper sticker has summed up the prevailing consumerism, "The person who dies with the most toys, wins."

Elsewhere in Hall's article, "Mission as a Function of Stewardship," he went so far as to make the tautology, "Stewardship is mission; mission is stewardship."[115] In this writer's view, the statement borders on *reductio ad absurdem*. While the two are interrelated and inextricably so, mission is a result of stewardship and not a synonym for it. The author certainly favours the notion that mission is axiomatic to stewardship. If there is no mission there is no stewardship, and *vice versa*. But it seems that mission is action resulting from an attitude and lifestyle called stewardship. Levan has captured that balance in this statement: "To be a Christian is to be a steward and to be a steward is to be involved in the mission of God in this world."[116] Nonetheless, Prof. Hall has done the Christian community a great service in compelling the church to look at a much more biblically inspired model of stewardship than has been extant for a long, long time. It is a model that undoubtedly has considerable implications for the seminary.

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[114] *Ibid.*, 59-60.

[115] Hall, "Mission as a Function of Stewardship," 42.

[116] Levan, *The Dancing Steward*, 14.

Athens or Berlin -- Pluralism or Schizophrenia?

A pattern is emerging that suggests stewardship is not an ethic formulated to meet the financial and people-power needs of an institution such as the church; nor is it a crass grab of funds under the guise of "ministry." Rather it is a lifestyle modeled on the Saviour's own attitude toward, and relationship with, God the Father. Because it is premised on modeling, in contrast to theory, it raises some interesting problems as to how stewardship may be taught and practiced in the theological school.

The modern seminary in North America is something of a hybrid in that it is a composite of two very different approaches to learning. It could be argued that these two approaches cannot meld at all--something like oil and water. Rather, they are more akin to schizophrenia than to a hybrid plant. That is, (at the risk of mixing these metaphors), instead of the two approaches being joined to form something better, they, like schizophrenic personalities, are often in conflict with each other. David H. Kelsey, following the lead of his colleague at Yale University, Hans Frei (d.1988), has accounted for the pedagogical tensions found in most North American seminaries and the resulting political stresses between the seminary and its sponsoring constituency. Kelsey has used the metaphor of an intersection of two roads to describe his thoughts. He explicates this metaphor:

> Theological schools grow up at the intersection of the Berlin Turnpike and (pick one or more) Trent Road, Augsburg Road, Geneva Road, Canterbury Road, Northhampton Road, or Azusa Street. That is to say, the factors that shape the concrete ethos of each particular theological school derive from its relation to the

> history and traditions of higher education as symbolized by the University of Berlin, on the one side, and on the other side, from its relation to some tradition of organized Christianity (Orthodox) or by place names emblematic of various revivals (Northhampton, Massachusetts; Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California).[117]

Therein lies the tension. The absolutes of tradition sometimes conflict with the Berlin model so firmly rooted in Enlightenment thought. In a perceptive article entitled "Theology in the University," published after his death in 1988, Hans Frei examined the roots of the modern seminary following the establishment of the University of Berlin in 1810. At the time, there was considerable debate as to whether or not a seminary had any place in a university devoted to learning by means of "unfettered critical enquiry"[118] free of any belief in absolute principles that could interfere with the findings of rational and critical thought. With a little tongue-in-cheek, Frei defines the German word *wissenschaft* used by German academics at the time to describe their form of empirical inquiry and which was transported to the fertile soil of the North American institutions of higher learning:

> Wissenschaft [*sic*], then, is the inquiry into the universal, rational principles that allow us to organize any and all specific fields of inquiry into internally and mutually coherent, intelligent totalities; perhaps, if we just watch our language and do not try too hard for lucidity, it may be translated as "an inquiry into the transcendental principles justifying all systematic method and explanation."[119]

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[117] David H. Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological About a Theological School*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 30.

[118] Hans Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 95.

[119] *Ibid.*, 98.

The theologues did manage to win acceptance for their seminary[120] in the University of Berlin but at a price. In Prussia at any rate, "Ministerial training was under the complete control of the state authority."[121] Moreover, training that took place under the intellectual and pedagogical assumptions of *wissenschaft* often conflicted with training based solely on church tradition and practice. This latter approach is rooted in the ancient Greek concept adopted by the early church called *paideia*. David Kelsey has described the function of *paideia* in Greek culture:

> Its aim was to form in the souls of the young the virtue or *arete* they needed to function as responsible citizens. In its earliest form this schooling had focused on athletics and on the study of poetry ascribed to Homer. The assumption was that by simultaneously subjecting the bodies of the young to physical discipline and their souls to the traditions and customs of ancient Greece as conveyed by literature, they would emerge deeply shaped by those dispositions or habits, that is virtues, that make a good citizen.[122]

Early church leaders were steeped in the *paideia* concept and translated it to the education of their disciples.

Paideia, in essence, is a form of education by modeling or example. While Kelsey has described the often-conflicting influences of *wissenschaft* and *paideia* in the

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[120] "The decision, reached after considerable controversy, to include a faculty of theology in the newly founded University of Berlin in 1810 created a new type of excellent theological education for which we shall let 'Berlin' be the symbol. This type of education is bipolar: it stresses the interconnected importance of the two quite different enterprises-- *Wissenschaft* or orderly, disciplined critical research on the one hand, and 'professional' education for ministry on the other."
(David H. Kelsey, *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 12).

[121] Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, 101.

[122] Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly*, 65.

modern seminary under the rubric of pluralism,[123] what often results is an almost schizophrenic approach to the education of leaders. Seminary administrations are torn between the demands of academe for "unfettered critical inquiry," to use Frei's phrase, and the equally strident demands of the supporting constituency, usually a denomination and/or a core of generous benefactors insisting that the seminary keep to the faith of the fathers (and mothers). Certainly that has been part of the experience of McMaster Divinity College.

McMaster Divinity College -- Where Does It Fit?

"Liberation theologians as well as devout, converted conservatives see in academic theology an entrapped camp follower of an intellectual elite, an alienated upper-middle-class culture, walking unsteadily on the weakening planks of a decaying First World floor."[124] In the eyes of those outside the mainstream seminaries, the divinity schools that owe their academic parentage to Berlin and the academics within them are hopelessly imprisoned in an Enlightenment mindset. It may not be phrased that way but the tensions between the thinkers and the doers, to put it more crassly, is almost palpable. McMaster Divinity College has not been immune from those tensions.

McMaster University, of which the Divinity College has always been a part in one

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[123] At the risk of being simplistic I will define pluralism for this paper as "two or more diverse systems of thought operating within the same organization."

[124] Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, 95.

way or another, was a denominational school founded by the Baptists of Ontario and Quebec. The University received its charter to grant degrees in 1887 (one year before the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec was chartered), and among its stated purposes was the mandate to train people for the Baptist ministry.

For most of its existence, the University included a faculty of theology and, until 1957, its chancellors[125] and presidents[126] were drawn exclusively from Baptist ranks. That arrangement changed in 1957 when the Province of Ontario "secularized" and funded many denominational schools, including McMaster, to meet the growing financial needs and increase in students. Most denominations that controlled or "owned " universities could not absorb the increased costs and reluctantly surrendered their charters. The Divinity College became a "professional" school, a la Berlin, in a manner similar to engineering and medicine. But that was only the final step in a journey that was set in motion 70 years before. As with so many North American seminaries, the McMaster faculty of theology tried to incorporate the pedagogical traditions of *wissenschaft* and *paideia*. The results were predictable. In fact, the University, and

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[125] The Chancellor ceased to be the administrative head of McMaster University in 1950 under the leadership of George Peel Gilmour (1900-1963). Gilmour became the University's first President and Vice-Chancellor.

> In keeping with the established practice elsewhere in the English-speaking world, the office of Chancellor was now made a titular one and the new office of President and Vice-Chancellor was introduced to describe more accurately the duties and responsibilities of the functioning head of the institution.

(Charles M. Johnston, *McMaster University: 2/The Early Years in Hamilton, 1930-1957*, [Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1981], 170-171).

[126] Henry (Harry) G. Thode (1910-1996) was the first non-Baptist President in the history of the University. Thode was a member of the United Church of Canada and was President from 1961-1972.
(*Canadian "Who's Who*, ed. Kieran Simpson, [Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1991], 1012-1013).

especially the faculty of theology, became the focus of criticism that finally led to a schism within the denomination in 1927--a split from which the BCOQ has never fully recovered.

Traditionally, the Divinity College has been funded from a variety of sources including an annual grant from the BCOQ, tuition fees, private donations, and in more recent times, provincial government grants channeled through McMaster University. Interestingly, despite the fact that donations from member churches to the BCOQ have declined $600,000 from 1991-1995, the Convention's contribution to the Divinity College had actually increased between 1991 and 1995.[127]

Table 1

Amounts Received From the BCOQ	
1991	221,833
1992	217,800
1993	212,775
1994	238,261
1995	247,000[128]

[127] This is somewhat misleading in that BCOQ grants have fluctuated for a longer period than the writer has cited. Indeed, in 1989 the College received $292,005 from the Convention premised on a short-lived principal of basing the grant on a dollar amount per student, hence, the sharp decline in funding the following year when that principle was abrogated. The table above is offered only to reflect the fact that the Convention's grants to MDC did not mirror percentage wise, the decline in revenues that it received during the same period. That decline in revenues has certainly been reflected in the last two years. The vicissitudes of more recent Convention grants and the resulting unpredictability of revenues will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

[128] Based on figures received from the former MDC Bursar, M. E. C. Lang.

And this, notwithstanding some controversy (again) surrounding the Divinity College at the 1995 BCOQ Assembly! But will the largesse continue? Not likely, unless there is a dramatic turnaround in the Convention's fortunes. Both 1996 and 1997 have witnessed a sharp decline in BCOQ contributions to MDC in that the College was given $235,725 in 1996 and received $193,000 in 1997.

In the meantime, the College is experiencing its highest enrollments ever. Moreover, the diversity of the student body in terms of denominational representation, number and percentage of female students, and ethnic diversity has never been greater.[129] It appears that MDC is responding to the paradigm shift taking place in the society around it. But whither stewardship? Is a pragmatic response to the radical shift in thinking currently underway adequate for a Christian seminary? Surely not! The concerns of the gospel, with its emphasis on God's love and justice for a fallen humanity and God's care and concern for Creation, must take precedence over merely increasing numbers, be they dollars or students, as important and as necessary as these factors are. In short, the seminary must have a sense of mission[130]--a mission governed by the gospel and in response to it. As Church Consultant Kennon L. Callahan so tersely expressed it

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[129] The trends in a widening denominational constituency and increasing ethnic diversity will be examined more closely in chapter 5.

[130] Many institutions, both Christian and secular, have "Mission Statements" prominently displayed in their publications. The mission statement articulates the *raison d'etre* for the institution's existence and is a succinct reminder of its purpose for those who work in it and for those who are its clients. It is this writer's view that the seminary exists not only to prepare men and women for the ministry of the gospel in its multi-faceted forms, but also to exemplify the principles of the gospel in the behaviour, lifestyle, and demeanour of its faculty and staff. In short, those who comprise the faculty and administrative staff ought to be models for students to emulate. It is the blend of *paideia* and *wissenschaft* in human flesh.

in his work, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, "Money follows mission."[131] It is also fair to say that students follow mission too.

Conclusion: Whither Stewardship in the Seminary

The 1990s have not been easy in a financial sense for many seminaries in Canada. Canadian Theological Seminary in Regina (Christian and Missionary Alliance) cannot offer an accredited[132] D. Min. programme due to budget cuts. Ontario Theological Seminary and Ontario Bible College teetered on the brink of bankruptcy throughout the 1995-96 term, and the schools are not out of danger yet. Trinity College (Anglican) in federation with Toronto School of Theology on the campus of the University of Toronto is in academic difficulty because of a lack of qualified faculty. Other denominational institutions of long standing have had to merge with those of similar polity. Seminaries, too, particularly those that have received substantial funding in the past from a sponsoring denomination as MDC has from the BCOQ, are having to seek income from other sources. If they are to survive, seminaries are required to use the available resources in much more effective ways. In short, they are required to become better stewards.

But what does that involve? For one thing religious seminaries such as McMaster that have traditionally been linked to a specific denomination will need to appeal to a

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[131] Kennon L. Callahan, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 112.

[132] Accreditation by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS)--the major accrediting body in North America.

much wider constituency within the Christian community. University based seminaries will need to facilitate the churches in its mission through a much more comprehensive programme of lay training rooted firmly in the gospel. If the experience of MDC is anything to go by, many of the students attending seminary have little expectation of entering the so-called "professional ministry." They attend in order to enhance their knowledge of the Christian faith and to help themselves become better Christians. Many non-Baptists have no intention of becoming Baptists, but they do want to attend a seminary that they believe teaches the historic, orthodox faith without surrendering the advances gained in biblical criticism over the last two centuries and where they feel welcome as a fellow pilgrim in Christ. The exclusive categories upon which many North American seminaries were founded are no longer viable.

An institution like MDC is unique on the campus of a university. While it is considered a professional school in that it trains people for a specific occupation, unlike other professional schools--law, medicine, and engineering for example--many of the seminary's graduates do not enter the profession for which they are trained. Their training serves a wider purpose: to minister to the broader Christian community in providing exemplary leadership of the effectiveness of the gospel in the lives of God's people. Vallet and Zech have offered a possible model for theological education to prepare men and women for pastoral ministry: "to walk with God, to interpret God's word, and to lead God's people."[133] That could be extended to include anyone who enters the seminary for the purpose of study, regardless of her/his intention to enter pastoral service or not.

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[133] Vallet and Zech, *The Mainline Church's Funding Crisis*, 162.

The key, it seems, is for the seminary to present models to students--models who pattern themselves after Jesus Christ, models who attempt to embody the qualities, the attitudes, and the lifestyle that Jesus himself incarnated. It will require an extensive education programme, one that will inculcate the greater concept of the steward into the seminarian--a stewardship that truly brings together the best of *wissenschaft* and *paideia*[134] based on the gospel sources. The metaphor of the steward recognizes these two ways of knowing and acknowledges their validity and limitations. But the metaphor also moves beyond their epistemological constraints by subsuming them under the gospel imperative of the church. It is happening now to some degree. McMaster's D. Min. programme does offer a stewardship and administration stream and it is becoming increasingly popular among doctoral students. However, the principles of stewardship need to be taught to those in the Masters level programmes as well, for it is those people too who will be the models for the persons to whom they minister.

The bronze plaque dedicated to the "Unknown Baptist Minister" adorning the wall of the foyer in McMaster Divinity College captures the purpose of the seminary in another time. The pastor will undoubtedly continue to exercise those functions depicted on the plaque, but the seminary of the future likely will not be devoted solely to the training of clergy. It is not now. Its job will be to train Christians of various

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[134] The editor of Kelsey's book, *Between Athens and Berlin,* has this note on the back cover: "For Kelsey, 'Athens' and 'Berlin' represent two very different--and ultimately irreconcilable--models of education. It is the case *de facto*, says Kelsey, that modern North American theological education, for historical reasons, is committed to both models, resulting in ongoing tensions and struggles." Nonetheless, the two models of *paideia* and *wissenschaft*, even though the source of considerable conflict and tension, are indispensable to learning in the modern seminary and to the practice of ministry in whatever setting it takes place.