A Half-Century of Strengthening Christian Ministry:
The Fund for Theological Education

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Through its fellowship programs, publications, and recruitment activities, FTE has strengthened the quality and diversity of ministry and theological scholarship across denominations.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Origins of the Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The 1960s and the Growth of FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>New Funding Realities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Renewed Interest in Theological Education and the New FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>The Reemergence of the Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>FTE in the 21st Century</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FTE has had a singular impact on theological education in the last 50 years. No other ecumenical organization has exhibited such a commitment to increasing the quality and diversity of theological education.

In many respects, the Fund’s innovative endeavors were well ahead of its time. The continuation of its programs has not always been easy, however. Its existence today is a tribute to the vision and dedication of FTE’s staff, board members, and supporters over the past five decades.

I first got to know FTE in the mid-1990s when the organization had ceased almost all programs and affiliated with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). As part of my work at ATS, I managed the few continuing fellowships. The only historian on staff at ATS, I was also given the task of working with the unorganized FTE archives then located in Pittsburgh. Sifting through these records, I was fascinated by the contribution of the Fund’s programs, the prominence of its alumni, and its rich organizational history.

In working on this project I have received the help and counsel of many. I am particularly grateful to Union Seminary in New York for its care in preserving the FTE archives and assisting my research there. Jerry Dean Weber discussed the project with me at an early stage and oriented me to the philanthropic world of the 1950s and 1960s. I benefited from discussions with FTE staff, including Ann Svennungsen, Sharon Watson Fluker, Melissa Wiginton, and Kerry Traubert, who read the manuscript and corrected my most obvious errors. Those that remain are solely my own. Most of all, I am indebted to Jim Waits. He was the one who encouraged this project from the beginning and made the research possible. He demonstrated unflagging confidence in the future of FTE and saw possibilities where others did not. The renewal of the Fund’s work under his leadership is a fitting capstone to his extraordinary career in theological education.

Jonathan Strom
Preface

The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, the farmer knows not how.  

MARK 4:26-27

For 50 years The Fund for Theological Education has been sowing seeds of encouragement—inspiring faithful and gifted young people to serve as leaders in God’s church. Though the programs of FTE have changed through the years, adapting to changing cultural contexts, the mission has remained the same: raising up excellent and diverse Christians to lead in church and society.

Like the farmer who cannot predict the fruitfulness of the springtime planting, the early FTE could not know the exact outcome of its work. Now, looking back, we recognize that the mission has produced a plentiful harvest, bearing fruit beyond what the founders could have imagined. In 50 years, FTE has provided over 5,500 fellowships to gifted young people answering the call to ministry and theological scholarship. These Fellows shine among the brightest and best of our nation’s pastors, scholars, and leaders.

As we stand at this landmark moment in FTE’s life, we give thanks to God for the first 50 years of fruitful labor; we give thanks for the staff, trustees, and volunteers who have partnered with God in this work; we praise God for the Fellows who serve throughout the world—ministering for the sake of God’s justice and mercy; and we ask for God’s power, wisdom, and presence as we faithfully continue this work for the sake of God’s world.

Our deep thanks to Dr. Jonathan Strom for writing this well-researched, thoughtful, and articulate history of The Fund for Theological Education. We hope it will inspire others to join and support this essential work of nurturing the next generation of leaders for the church.

The Rev. Ann M. Svennungsen  
President

The Rev. Dr. Gary V. Simpson  
Chair, Board of Trustees
For a half-century, The Fund for Theological Education (FTE) has been dedicated to drawing talented young people to the Christian ministry in North America. Through its fellowship programs, publications, and recruitment activities, FTE has strengthened the quality and diversity of ministry and theological scholarship across denominations. It has promoted academic excellence, sought candidates outside traditional recruitment paths, and pioneered programs that have brought students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups into the mainstream of theological education. Throughout the Fund’s history, its programs and goals have reflected many of the broader society’s preoccupations with Christian ministry—especially those of the philanthropic organizations that provided the necessary financial support for the Fund’s activities.

FTE’s programs have changed considerably during the past 50 years, just as theological education in North America has undergone great shifts. The Fund began as a mainline Protestant organization that sought to attract gifted young men to the ministry, most of whom attended elite non- or interdenominational theological schools in the Northeast. Soon it began to diversify. In 1960, the Fund began its first program directed specifically to underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, and in the 1970s it expanded these initiatives significantly. After 1970, women—who had previously been excluded from many of the Fund’s programs—accounted for an increasingly larger percentage of recipients. In 2003–2004, women constituted 55 percent of FTE’s Fellows. The Fund has also diversified denominationally. Early recipients were almost all members of mainline Protestant denominations. Although still heavily Protestant, the Fund’s Fellows, who attend a much wider range of theological institutions, include evangelical, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic scholars. In the most recent years, FTE has expanded its programs far beyond the vision of its early founders, but it remains committed to the fundamental goal of the early Fund: strengthening Christian ministry in North America.
The Origins of the Fund

A number of leaders predicted a shortage in the coming decades of ministers to serve the expanding churches. In growing concerns about the state of Protestant ministry and theological education. Immediately after World War II, seminary enrollments swelled with returning veterans who had postponed their studies, but by the early 1950s, enrollments appeared stagnant. A number of leaders predicted a shortage in the coming decades of ministers to serve the expanding churches. They feared that the growth of religion would not be accompanied by the development of enough well-qualified ministers.

In 1951, the National Council of Churches estimated that more than 15,000 pulpits among its member churches remained unfilled. Two years later, Liston Pope, Dean of Yale Divinity School, described a “critical shortage” of ministers for Protestants in America. Methodists alone estimated that they would need an additional 10,000 ministers in the coming years. Pope identified a number of reasons for the shortage: The low birth rate during the Depression had reduced the number of young men and women in their 20s, and in an expanding post-war economy, educated men and women faced a growing number of options in business and industry that enticed them away from careers in ministry. The meager salaries ministers faced may also have contributed to the difficulty in recruiting young people for the ministry. Pope concluded, “It is evident that the crisis in ministerial supply will deepen steadily unless systematic and strenuous efforts at recruitment are launched.”

Initiatives for Theological Education

Concern about the state of the Protestant ministry was widespread in the early 1950s, and the decade brought some of the most important initiatives to shape theological education for the rest of the century. The Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching funded a multi-year project, headed by H. Richard Niebuhr, which produced three landmark studies on the ministry.

In the 1950s, the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS) grew from a small association run by volunteers to a professionally staffed organization charged with the broader mission of furthering the quality of theological education across North America. The Danforth Foundation supported a series of initiatives focused on the place of religious life in higher education, particularly campus ministry. In addition, the Indiana-based Lilly Endowment Inc. contributed to a number of programs at individual institutions, as well as to the AATS itself.

The philanthropic foundations connected to the Rockefeller family also responded to the concerns. In the 1920s and early 1930s, John D. Rockefeller Jr. had generously supported individual seminaries and divinity schools. By the 1940s, as a matter of policy, he had...
Yorke Allen Jr. of the Rockefeller Brothers and Sealantic funds drafted the first proposals for the Fund’s programs and supported the Fund’s work until his retirement in 1975.

The philanthropy of John D. Rockefeller Jr. made the early work of the Fund possible.

largely withdrawn support from theological institutions. In the early 1950s, however, Rockefeller and the related family foundations began to consider new initiatives for furthering Protestant theological education. Dana Creel and Yorke Allen Jr., program officers of the Sealantic and the Rockefeller Brothers funds, developed criteria that would guide Rockefeller philanthropy in theological education. In a 1951 memorandum to John D. Rockefeller Jr., Creel especially argued that strengthening theological education afforded the best opportunity for putting Protestantism “back in the bloodstream of the country.” Creel and Allen emphasized that the recipients of Rockefeller funding should be primarily non- or multi-denominational schools in all regions of the country that were of the highest quality and liberal in orientation. They urged that special attention be paid to the recruitment of candidates for ministry and the quality of seminary teaching.

The Trial-Year Program

In 1952, as a new initiative of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF), Creel and Allen began to develop a proposal for the recruitment of candidates to theological education. Allen had researched many of the problems facing the ministry in the early 1950s, and he returned repeatedly to the issue of ministerial recruitment. Allen focused particular attention on the recent college graduates who had not yet made a decision to enter ministry, but “who are sufficiently interested to spend a year at a divinity school exploring the possibility.” From discussions with educational and religious leaders, Allen concluded that financial need was not a primary hindrance to theological studies. Allen wanted to encourage undecided candidates of the highest caliber to attend seminary under the auspices of a prestigious fellowship program. He hoped that, once exposed to the theological curriculum, many of the Fellows would choose to continue their studies and enter the ministry.

The model for the proposed “Divinity School Fellowships” was the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship program, established in 1945 to encourage young college graduates to enter academic careers in the arts and sciences. The Woodrow Wilson fellowships provided funding for an initial year of graduate study, after which the universities were expected to support those who continued their studies. The highly competitive nature of the Woodrow Wilson fellowships increased the profile of graduate studies across the United States. By creating a similar program for theological education, the staff of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund aimed to boost the visibility of theological studies for recent college graduates. In structuring the new program, Allen sought the counsel of Whitney Oates, a professor of humanities at Princeton who had initiated the Woodrow Wilson fellowships at Princeton and later led the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. Oates became an enthusiastic supporter and would serve as a long-term member of FTE’s board of directors.

Allen also discussed the new fellowship program extensively with Henry Pitney Van Dusen, president of Union Seminary, and Liston Pope, dean of Yale Divinity School. Yale and Union were the two leading interdenominational theological schools of the early 1950s, and initially Allen proposed that Union and Yale administer the Fund jointly, although Fellows would be free to attend any accredited seminary. Creel and Allen estimated that the Rockefeller Brothers Fund would commit $100,000 a year to the program and provide funding for around 50 fellowships a year to cover tuition, fees, and living expenses.

Allen hoped to begin the competition for the 1953–1954 academic year, but he faced a number of difficulties in establishing the new fellowship program. Creel and Allen hesitated to give Union and Yale ownership of the program. In particular, Creel was interested in establishing the fellowships as a national program that would be geographically and denominationally diverse. On Van Dusen’s suggestion, Allen and Creel consulted with the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS) as a possible sponsoring organization. The AATS represented a broad spectrum of accredited Protestant seminaries and divinity schools in North America. The executive committee of the AATS received
The Rockefeller Fellowships were “designed for a particular purpose, namely to discover and develop new talent for the Christian ministry.” The Fellowships covered all tuition and living costs for the first year of seminary study.
the proposal from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund warmly, and on October 10, 1953, the members voted to accept the three-year proposal. Because the AATS was unincorporated, however, it was necessary to establish a separate legal entity, the American Association of Theological Schools Fund Inc.\textsuperscript{15}

With the support and counsel of Van Dusen, Pope, and Edward Roberts, the president of the AATS, Creel and Allen began to recruit members for the new organization’s board of directors. They sought directors from the major denominations as well as a mix of theological educators and lay persons from around the country. One of the most important figures to be recruited to the Fund’s cause was Nathan Pusey, the new president of Harvard University. Pusey, who had just come to Harvard University from the presidency at Lawrence College, brought with him strong religious beliefs and an avid interest in university theological education.\textsuperscript{16} Pusey, unlike his predecessor, James Conant, who sought to push the Divinity School to the margins at Harvard, signaled a new priority for the Divinity School and set out to revitalize its faculty.\textsuperscript{17} His emphasis on the training of ministers at Harvard caught the eye of many in theological education, as well as philanthropists like John D. Rockefeller Jr. In the autumn of 1953, Pusey and Rockefeller developed a personal relationship, which led to Rockefeller’s substantial support for Harvard Divinity School.\textsuperscript{18} Creel and Allen approached Pusey in late 1953 to serve as president of the Fund’s board of directors. Pusey accepted, and over the next two decades he became one of the Fund’s most visible and ardent supporters.

**The Fund’s Inauguration**

In early 1954, the staff at Rockefeller Brothers Fund, along with Van Dusen and Pope, worked quickly to establish the new program. In draft form, the fellowships had been known variously as the Jonathan Edwards Fellowships, Divinity School Fellowships, and Rockefeller Theological Fellowships. The organizers finally settled on the Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fellowship Program.\textsuperscript{19} The composition of the Fund’s board of directors was finalized, and the board held its inaugural meeting in New York on April 27, 1954. The board comprised leading educators in theology and higher education, as well as a number of prominent laity outside academia.\textsuperscript{20} Robert Rankin took a leave of absence from his position as chaplain at the Associated Colleges of Claremont to become executive director of the Fund’s organization.

In an abbreviated competition for the 1954–55 academic year, the board approved five initial Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fellows and authorized the intensive efforts that would be necessary to recruit candidates for the roughly 50 fellowships that would be offered for the 1955–56 academic year. An early statement described the intention of the new Rockefeller fellowships:

The program is designed for those who are not already committed to the Christian ministry. It is intended for students who are uncertain in regard to their vocation, young persons preparing for careers in other fields, and recent graduates presently in other occupations or in the military services, who are interested in giving serious consideration to the possibility of entering the ministry. It is not a general theological fellowship program, but one designed for a particular purpose, namely to discover and develop new talent for the Christian ministry.\textsuperscript{21}

The Fund would cover all tuition and living costs during the first year of seminary study, but support was strictly limited to one year.\textsuperscript{22} Applications were only accepted from those nominated by ministers or faculty persons, and personal interviews played an integral part in assessment. The board of directors emphasized the intellectual quality of recipients.\textsuperscript{23} On behalf of the new program, Nathan Pusey sent a letter to the presidents of 400 colleges and universities.
in North America, explaining the new program and urging them to aid in recruitment. In addition, Rankin embarked on an ambitious plan to visit universities and colleges across the country to draw interest to the new program. For the 1955–56 academic year, the Fund received over 330 nominations and awarded 47 fellowships to recipients across the country. The first full class of Fellows was regionally diverse, hailing from across the United States and Canada. They also included three women and two African Americans. They represented 37 colleges and universities. Most of the Rockefeller Fellows, however, chose to study at interdenominational theological schools in the Northeast, particularly Yale and Union Seminary. In this respect, the program reflected the inclinations of the Rockefeller foundations to support theological education at predominantly non- and interdenominational institutions. The new program was the subject of numerous articles in the press. In early 1955, it even received national publicity in an NBC television forum on the Christian ministry in which Nathan Pusey, Liston Pope, and John D. Rockefeller III all appeared.

Early Success
In 1955, after one year as executive director of the Fund, Rankin chose to return to Claremont. To replace Rankin, the board conducted a national search and hired Walter Wagoner, then chaplain at Northwestern University. Ordained in the Congregational Christian Church and a graduate of Yale Divinity School, Wagoner enthusiastically shared the Fund’s core goals of improving the quality of the Protestant ministry. He built energetically on Rankin’s recruiting efforts and conveyed the urgency of the new initiative to a larger audience. Over the next 12 years, Wagoner, more than any other figure, would put his stamp on the Fund’s programs.

At the end of the first full year of the Rockefeller Fellowships, Wagoner and the board of directors were pleased with the early success of the program. Surveys of the Fellows indicated that more than 60 percent were headed toward parish ministry, a fact that particularly pleased the staff at RBF, who closely monitored the program’s progress. Moreover, the Fellows were academically strong—their deans placed them in the top third of the seminary class. From year to year, nominations for the program increased steadily. Some complaints were heard about the denominational background of the Fellows and their concentration at Harvard, Yale, and Union, which together accounted for nearly 75 percent of the theological schools chosen. But by and large the program was well received.

In 1958, when the program came up for review by the RBF, Wagoner judged it a strong success. Not only did the Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fellowships attract candidates to the ministry who would not otherwise have considered it, but the program’s prominence and the intensive recruiting efforts encouraged others to consider ministry. Moreover, the presence of the Fellows at the theological institutions themselves contributed “to a more lively and probing academic atmosphere.” Some at Yale and Union were concerned that the large numbers of Rockefeller Fellows at their institutions could overwhelm the student body. The Rockefeller Fellows generally distinguished themselves academically. Like Wagoner, the RBF staff members were pleased with the program. On their recommendation, the trustees of the RBF voted to renew the program for another three years, the first of many renewals. Over the next two decades, the “Trial-Year” Fellowships would form the core of the Fund’s programs and become its most visible effort.

The Rockefeller Doctoral Fellowships
In March 1958, Yorke Allen Jr. brought a proposal for a doctoral fellowship program to the board of the AATS Fund. At the time, there was a shortage of qualified teachers at theological institutions, and H. Richard Niebuhr discussed with the Sealantic Fund
a plan to finance doctoral study in religion at Yale and other prominent universities.\textsuperscript{34}

It is significant that the proposal did not originate from the Fund's board, but the board agreed to implement and administer the new Rockefeller Doctoral Fellowships.\textsuperscript{35} These were to be awarded to current doctoral students who exhibited "unusual promise as theological school teachers and scholars." Nominations were usually made by the student's own institution and did not involve the recruitment, lengthy interviews, and applications procedures of the Trial-Year Fellowships. Consequently, the administrative burden on the Fund for the new program was slight.\textsuperscript{36}

Awards were primarily intended for students in their terminal year, but unlike the Trial-Year Fellowships, the doctoral fellowships were renewable. The Sealantic Fund made $500,000 available for the first five years of the program, allowing the Fund to offer up to 35 doctoral fellowships each year.\textsuperscript{37} The program nearly doubled the Fund's budget on a yearly basis, but the rationale for the doctoral program within the Fund's work was never as clearly established as was the Trial-Year Program.

A New Identity

By the end of the 1950s, the Fund's original name, the American Association of Theological Schools Fund Inc., no longer appeared satisfactory. The AATS itself had been unincorporated when the Fund began in 1954, and despite close ties, the two organizations were distinct legal entities. Especially after the AATS incorporated in 1956 and acquired its own professional staff and programs, the two organizational names were difficult to distinguish. The Fund's board was eager to establish a distinct identity. Neither Wagoner nor Rankin had particularly stressed the incorporated name in public materials. Wagoner at one point lobbied to rename the organization the Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fund Inc., but Dana Creel at RBF was reluctant to follow the suggestion.\textsuperscript{38} In 1959, Wagoner proposed to the board that it revise its charter and rename itself The Fund for Theological Education, signaling its broader concerns for theological education and also opening itself to funding sources outside of the Sealantic and Rockefeller Brothers funds.\textsuperscript{39} In 1960, the board adopted the new name and made a number of changes to its charter, broadening its stated mission. Despite the Fund's new name, its programs nevertheless remained closely identified with the Rockefeller name.

Supporting African-American Seminary Education

From the beginning, and quite apart from any change in name, the organization's directors had understood the Fund as more than an agency dispensing scholarships; they saw it as an organization committed to broader issues of strengthening the Protestant ministry. In addition to the flagship program, Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fellowships, the board explored a range of questions related to the recruitment and retention of Protestant clergy.\textsuperscript{40} One issue that the board returned to repeatedly in its early years was the state of the ministry among African Americans.

The Rockefeller family had been prominent supporters of a number of African-American causes. They were instrumental in providing financial funding to Spelman College in Atlanta. The United Negro College Fund began with support from John D. Rockefeller Jr. and the family foundations. In addition, one of the goals of the Sealantic Fund, after its extraordinary $20 million gift by John D. Rockefeller Jr., was to strengthen the African-American ministry.\textsuperscript{41} In the late 1950s, the Sealantic Fund provided crucial grants that allowed the historically black seminaries to federate in Atlanta as the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC).\textsuperscript{42}

Before World War II, Benjamin E. Mays had raised concerns about the state of the African-American ministry, calling it "the most neglected area in Negro education."\textsuperscript{43} A charter member of the Fund's board, Mays raised the issue among the directors, and in 1956 the board voted to pursue a program "to encourage competent and promising Negro college graduates to attend seminary."\textsuperscript{44} The board commissioned an additional report in 1957, which it submitted to the Rockefeller Brothers Fund for further consideration. Yorke Allen Jr., in response to the request, reported that the RBF was, in fact, very interested in the issues the report posed, and suggested that in the future it would be
given “top priority” by the RBF. Others at the time echoed these concerns. In their book, The Advancement of Theological Education, Niebuhr, Williams, and Day devoted an appendix to the problems facing African-American theological education.

The Seabury Consultation
In Connecticut in 1959, efforts to address the special issues related to the African-American church coalesced around the consultation at Seabury House in which 65 participants representing 19 Protestant denominations discussed in detail the need for theologically educated clergy in the African-American church. The consultation was funded by Lilly Endowment and the National Council of Churches. FTE board member Benjamin Mays was one of the keynote speakers. Walter Wagoner and Yorke Allen Jr. from the RBF attended, as did Charles Taylor, executive director of the AATS and an officer of the FTE board.

The foremost concern at Seabury was the lack of African-American students in graduate theological education. Harry Richardson, president of ITC, noted that there was no shortage of African-American ministers per se, but there was a dearth of seminary-educated African-American clergy. In a survey of seminaries of the AATS, Richardson found only 387 African-American students in all degree programs, a number woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the African-American churches. In addition to the problems of recruitment shared by all Protestants, African Americans faced many additional obstacles that largely resulted from discrimination and segregation, but which also reflected a tradition of non-seminary-educated ministers among African Americans.

One result of the Seabury consultation was the establishment of a new fellowship program for African-American theological students. Developed jointly by Walter Wagoner and Yorke Allen Jr., the Protestant Fellowship Program (PFP), as they called it, was the first of the Fund’s programs to address specific issues of race and ministry. Funding for the new initiative came from the Sealantic Fund, which provided support each year for approximately 35 African-American seminary students and college seniors.

In contrast to the Trial-Year Program, these awards were renewable throughout seminary, an aspect which reflected the more difficult financial situation faced by African-American students. In addition to the new program’s direct financial support of students, it was also intended to further the study of African-American churches and stimulate a broad range of other activities that would strengthen these institutions.

Ambitious Recruitment of African Americans
Seeking an associate director to help implement the new program, Wagoner tapped C. Shelby Rooks, pastor at Lincoln Memorial Congregational Temple in Washington, D.C. Rooks became the second professional staff person at FTE and assumed responsibilities for the Protestant Fellowship Program and other areas of the Fund’s work. One priority for Rooks would be the collection of information about African-American students enrolled in graduate theological education. Virtually no information was available on the topic either from the AATS or other sources. Rooks sent out detailed surveys to each of the AATS schools seeking information about African-American students.

Rooks found that the number of African Americans in seminary during 1960–61 had dropped to about 300, substantially fewer than the 387 cited by Richardson two years before.

Rooks set out to craft a recruitment strategy for African Americans. In his memoir, Revolution in Zion, he describes the challenges he faced in establishing the new program and the revolution in attitudes of institutions and individuals it would require to succeed. Many in African-American higher education were hostile to recruitment of the best and the brightest to ministry. Moreover, Rooks notes, at a time when only two seminaries fully accredited by the AATS were predominately African American—Howard and ITC—the other accredited seminaries of the AATS were almost completely indifferent to the recruitment, needs, and concerns of the African-American students.
Rooks embarked on an ambitious recruiting schedule for the new program. Much of his travel for FTE took him to institutions in the segregated South, which often proved difficult for an African American. Rooks stressed the need for strengthening of college chaplaincies at institutions with large numbers of African-American students, and in 1961 he also instituted a number of FTE regional conferences for African-American students.

In the first year of the Protestant Theological Fellowships Program, FTE offered only 24 fellowships, although it had funding for up to 40. Reflecting the standards set by the Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fellowships, Rooks and the other members of the selection process were particularly concerned with upholding the high quality of the program, even if it meant not awarding all of the available fellowships. Benjamin E. Mays, who sat on the selection committees, felt that the standards of FTE should be sufficiently high that the recipients would be accepted at any of the AATS seminaries, including Union, Harvard, and Yale. Unlike the Trial-Year Program, however, the students in the Protestant Fellowship Program attended a much broader spectrum of AATS schools. Moreover, the recipients were committed to ministry in a way that Rockefeller Fellows were not. Although the program changed names and its sources of funding in the 1970s, it became the longest running and one of most influential of the Fund’s programs until it ended in 1995.

Women and the Ministry
The most contentious issue the Fund dealt with in the first years of its programs was women and ministry. None of the early proposals explicitly excluded women, although it is clear that the initiators of the program did not envision a large role for women in the Fellowship programs. At that time, only a small number of denominations regularly ordained women. At the board’s first meeting in 1954, however, it deliberately construed ministry in terms broader than just the ordained ministry, opening the fellowships to women nominees as well as men. Five months later, at the next board meeting, the board stated its intention more clearly to include women, noting that, “rather than speak of the ‘pastoral ministry’ we refer to the ‘ministry’ since the term ‘pastoral ministry’ would appear to be too narrow and might seem to exclude women.”

The executive committee appeared less inclined to accept women candidates, and its members narrowed the eligibility of women to only those whose denominations ordain women. At the next full meeting of the board of directors, however, Mildred McAfee Horton, former president of Wellesley College, questioned the executive committee’s decision, arguing that it imposed an “artificial barrier” to women in ministry. The board voted to remove the denominational restriction so long as the women “would consider the possibility of changing denominations if in their year of exploratory study they felt drawn to the vocation of the pastoral ministry.”

Over the next five years, the Fund chose 29 women as Fellows, but the issue of women in the Rockefeller program remained contentious. Initially, Walter Wagoner warmly supported the recruitment of women to the program. However, some board members raised concerns about women in the program. Criticism also came from staff at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

Mary Ely Lyman, who had replaced Horton on the board of directors, made an eloquent appeal to include women in the fellowship program. She argued, first, that women’s education was changing rapidly, and to neglect the opportunity to educate women theologically at this point in their lives would be unfortunate. Second, Lyman predicted that Protestants would be more and more open to women in ministry, and for the Fund to exclude women would set the wrong example.

By 1958, Wagoner had changed his mind and argued that women should be excluded from the program. Out of 11 women Fellows so far, he noted, it appeared that only one intended to enter the parish ministry. Wagoner conceded that many of these women often went into leadership in the church outside of parish ministry, but given the program’s strict emphasis on recruiting for parish ministry, he felt that further fellowships for women were “too much of a risk.” Nevertheless, the board sided with Lyman and voted to continue the inclusion of women in the program. They did urge the nominating committees to use greater care in selecting women candidates.

Margaret Howland was an early Rockefeller Fellow.
In 1959, Wagoner returned to the issue of accepting women in the program. He emphasized the low number of women Fellows entering parish ministry and argued that “the high percentage of women Fellows returning to lay vocations radically unbalances the over-all statistical ’batting average’ of our program.” The board continued to affirm the place of women in the program, stressing, however, that care be given to their selection. Wagoner raised the issue repeatedly with the board. Finally, the board voted in 1961 to make women ineligible for the Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fellowships beginning with the 1962–63 academic year.

Wagoner and many members of the Fund’s board favored women’s ordination in principle, but they felt that women’s success in the program was too slight to justify their continued participation. In fairness to Wagoner and the board, it also appears that there was substantial pressure from the staff at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to end women’s eligibility. In excluding women from the Trial-Year Program, the Fund’s board and its staff no doubt reflected the prevailing view that there was little room for women in the pulpits of Protestant churches. Yet the decision also marks one of the blind spots of the early Fund. Unlike its activist response to other issues, the Fund undertook no special studies of why these women who met the same rigorous standards as their male counterparts in the nomination and application process failed to complete seminary. No questions were raised about the barriers faced by women in theological studies or the unique problems they faced seeking ordination. Their failure was, in fact, a given. Coming to terms with women in ministry would be a continuing challenge for the Fund, and one in which it did not always acquit itself well.

2. See, for instance, the comments of Eugene Carson Blake, President of the National Council of Churches, who warned that the lack of qualified ministers during such a “boom” in religion might “lead to fanaticism or fail to be relevant to the deepest needs of men.” Washington Post, March 14, 1955, p. 7.
7. Ziegler, p. 121.
8. See Weber, p. 143
14. The Woodrow Wilson Fellowship program began in 1945 at Princeton. In the early 1950s, with funding from the General Education Board (a Rockefeller-supported foundation) and the Carnegie Corporation, it expanded its program considerably. In 1958, the Ford Foundation began its support of the fellowships, which continued until 1968, when the program was terminated. At the height of the program, nearly 1,000 fellows were selected each year. See Woodrow Wilson Fellows, 1945-1967 (Princeton, 1968), pp. v–vi.

15. RBFA, Series 3, FTE 1, Minutes from October 14, 1953.


17. Weber notes that Pusey’s first public address as president of Harvard was at the September 1953 Convocation of the Divinity School. Weber, p. 149. Pusey’s address was reprinted in full in Christianity and Crisis, vol. 13, no. 19, pp. 149–152, and was hailed as a new chapter in theological education at Harvard. See Weber, p. 150, and Henry Pitney Van Dusen, “President Pusey Speaks Again,” Christianity and Crisis, vol. 14, no. 8, pp. 57–58. Unlike Pusey, who was a committed Episcopalian, Conant was hostile to any form of dogmatic Christianity—and viewed the Divinity School with great ambivalence, which, as one observer remarked, “Conant had first hoped to drown like a kitten, and then to convert into a kind of ecclesiastical Nieman Foundation for visiting divines.” Smith, The Harvard Century, p. 185.

18. On the relationship between Rockefeller and Pusey, see Weber, pp. 151–152. Weber credits Pusey with accelerating Rockefeller’s re-entrance into funding theological education in the 1950s. Shortly after meeting Pusey, Rockefeller pledged $1 million to Harvard Divinity School, a gift which became crucial in returning Harvard to the first rank of university-related divinity schools in the mid-1950s.

19. RBFA, Box 247, FTE 2.

20. The officers of the board’s executive committee were: President, Nathan M. Pusey (president, Harvard University); vice-president, Gerald H. Kennedy (bishop, Methodist Church); secretary, Edward H. Roberts (dean, Princeton Theological Seminary, and president of the AATS); and treasurer, Thomas S. Lamont (Morgan Guaranty Trust). Other members of the board were Oren H. Baker (dean, Colgate Rochester Divinity School and Secretary of the AATS); Conrad Bergendorff (president, Augustana College); B. Harvie Branscomb (chancellor, Vanderbilt University); Sanford Fleming (president, Berkeley Baptist Divinity School); Franklin C. Fry (president, United Lutheran Church); Mildred McAfee Horton (president emerita, Wellesley College); Devereux Josephs (chairman of the board, New York Life); John A. Mackay (president, Princeton Theological Seminary); Benjamin E. Mays (president, Morehouse College); Arthur B.B. Moore (chancellor, Victoria College, Toronto); Whitney J. Oates (professor, Princeton University); Liston Pope (dean, Yale Divinity School); McGruder E. Sadler (chancellor, Texas Christian University); and Charles R. Taft (attorney, Cincinnati). None of the Rockefeller brothers served on the board of directors.


22. Robert Rankin announced to the 1954 AATS Biennial, “The monetary size of the Fellowship will depend upon the costs at the theological school he attends and his own personal situation. If he is married and has children and attends a seminary where costs are high, the grant will be correspondingly high.” AATS Bulletin (21) 1954, p. 112. In the early years of the program, the Fund estimated the average awards at around $1,300 per fellow.

23. The Fund’s board of directors stated, “Without minimizing in the slightest degree the spiritual qualifications needed in a candidate, there should be placed an unusually strong emphasis on his intellectual capacity.” Union Theological Seminary Archives (hereafter Union), FTE 04/03, Minutes, September 10, 1954.

24. RBFA, Box 247, FTE 3.


26. Washington Post, March 14, 1955, p. 7. Also on the panel were Eugene Carson Blake, president of the National Council; and Ralph W. Sockman, pastor, Christ Church (Methodist) in New York.

27. Many on the board had expected Rankin to stay longer and sought to persuade him to stay. Union FTE 04/04, Minutes, March 22, 1955. After returning to Claremont, Rankin remained involved with the Fund’s programs, particularly in recruitment efforts on the West Coast. In 1958, Rankin joined the Danforth Foundation. He retired as Vice President for Religion of the Danforth Foundation in 1980. Rankin’s papers are located at the University of Missouri, St. Louis.

28. Wagoner, in a December 1955 speech laying out his vision, argued that the shortage of ministers was both quantitative and qualitative and urged new efforts “in recruiting promising men and women to the ministry.” RBFA, Box 248, FTE 5, December 1955. Wagoner also argued that the appeal of the Protestant ministry had declined among young college graduates. He noted, “In 1900 the ministry was the second or third choice of college graduates; today it is about the thirty-third choice.” Ibid.


32. Union and Yale both limited the number of Rockefeller Fellows to about 15 percent of the entering class at Union and about 10 percent at Yale. Dean Horton at Harvard, however, remained open to as many Rockefeller Fellows as applied. RBFA, 248 FTE 6, Memo from Yorke Allen, March 18, 1958. With a smaller student body, Harvard’s Rockefeller Fellows made up as much as 25 percent of the entering class. Union FTE, 17/27.

33. Union FTE Archives, 04/07, Minutes, March 1, 1958.

35. Rooks states that Walter Wagoner and Charles Taylor, executive director of the AATS and member of the Fund’s board, conceived the project and brought it to the Sealantic Fund. Rooks, p. 23. Unlike other, later initiatives of the Fund, however, there was no prior discussion of such a proposal in the board’s minutes. The documents at the Rockefeller archives as well as existing records of FTE suggest that it was Niebuhr who conceived of the program, and that Allen brought the proposal to the Fund’s board of directors. See also Weber, pp. 179–180.

36. Wagoner noted that the program was easily assimilated into the Fund without additional staff or inordinate work. Weber, p. 180.

37. Union FTE 04/05, Minutes, March 20, 1956.

38. RBFA, 248, FTE 5. Note from 5/18/56.

39. Union FTE, 04/08, Minutes from February 28, 1959. Wagoner saw the new name as affording the Fund new possibilities. Addressing the board, Wagoner wrote: “It appears to me that we have nothing to lose and everything to gain by effecting these changes. This board by virtue of its independence and stature, can serve as an administrator of new programs financed by new donors, as well as continuing present tasks. We have here an opportunity to make a creative contribution to theological education. I hope very much, indeed, that your answer will be an affirmative one.” Union FTE 04/55, Report of the Executive Director, February 28, 1959. The immediate impetus for the name and charter change was a proposed donation to the Fund by Winston Paul, a New York businessman who would become a longstanding supporter of the Fund’s work, especially in the area of ministerial recruitment.

40. The board explored a number of possibilities for further study including salaries, psychological testing of ministerial candidates, and the continuing shortage of African-American ministers. See Union FTE, 04/03–04/08, Minutes, 1955–1959.

41. Dana Creel, who had long supported African-American theological education, proposed in 1955 that $2 million be earmarked for this purpose. Weber, pp. 157, 177.

42. On the role of the Rockefeller foundations in the origins of the ITC, see Weber, pp. 171–173. Weber reports that ITC received $3.4 million in Rockefeller funds.


44. Union FTE, 04/05 Minutes, March 20, 1956.

45. Union FTE, Minutes, March 1, 1958. In accounting for the delay, Allen reported that the RBF was preoccupied with the issues of the proposed federation of seminaries in Atlanta and the International Missionary Council.


47. Of the 1,200–1,500 new pastors called or appointed by African-American congregations each year, Richardson estimated that only 120–130 would be graduates of accredited seminaries. Rooks, p. 29.


49. Rooks, p. 80. The FTE continued to collect this information each year until 1970, when the AATS assumed responsibility for collecting and publishing the data.

50. Rooks, p. 82. In part, Rooks attributes this decrease to the emerging civil rights movement, which drew many bright African Americans away from academic studies.

51. Rooks quotes a dean of one African-American college, who told him, “I don’t see why you’re looking for such outstanding boys for the ministry. The average fellow can do quite well in that field.” Rooks, p. 53.


54. Among the major Protestant denominations, the Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Congregational Christian Church (later UCC) allowed women’s ordination in the mid-1950s in principle, though few women were ordained in these denominations at that time. The Episcopal and Lutheran, and most Baptist, denominations did not ordain women during the 1950s.

55. Union FTE 04/03, Minutes, April 27, 1954.

56. Union FTE 04/03, Minutes, September 10, 1954.

57. Union FTE 04/04, Minutes, March 22, 1955. In addition to the presidency at Wellesley, Horton had directed the Navy’s WAVES during World War II. She also became the first woman member of the National Council of Churches’ board. On Horton, see New York Times, September 4, 1994, p. 41.

58. In 1956, Wagoner wrote in the program’s newsletter, “We have 10 women Fellows. Did you know that there are now about 6,700 ordained women ministers in the United States, and that about 2,900 of these are full-time pastors — the balance serving full or part time as Directors of Religious Education, Ministers of Music, teachers and professors, etc.? ” RBFA, 248, FTE 5.

59. See Union FTE 04/05, Minutes, March 20, 1956.

60. Union FTE 04/07, Minutes, Appendix D, March 18, 1958. Lyman became the first female full professor at Union Seminary in 1950. She was ordained in 1949 in the Congregational Christian Church.

61. Union FTE 04/55, Report of the Executive Director, March 1, 1958. The records of the RBFA indicate that Yorke Allen Jr. was even more critical of women in the program. Yorke Allen Jr. memo to file, October 14, 1958.


64. Union FTE 04/55, Report of the Executive Director, February 27, 1960.

65. Allen made his displeasure over women in the program clear. In one 1959 memo, he cited it as the program’s chief defect. RBFA, Box 248, FTE 7. Memo from Allen to Creel, September 9, 1959.
Concerns over the state of the Protestant ministry continued from the late 1950s into the early 1960s. A 1961 Harris poll of seminarians cited in a Redbook article provoked widespread controversy for its depiction of the students as theologically unorthodox. Furthermore, a number of newspaper and magazine articles appeared in 1961 citing an overall decline in enrollments at Protestant seminaries. Figures published by the AATS show a decline in Protestant enrollments. When Walter Wagoner published a collection of essays titled Bachelor of Divinity in 1963, his opening chapter catalogued the widespread concerns voiced about the Protestant ministry.

The Continued Success of the Trial-Year Program

The continuing unease about the state of the Protestant ministry confirmed the Fund's major programs, especially the Trial-Year Program and its attempts to recruit students who would otherwise not have considered the ministry. In 1962, the Fund commissioned a series of reports from the major theological schools attended by Rockefeller Fellows about the impact of the Trial-Year Program. The studies largely confirmed the goals of the program, emphasizing the overall quality of the Fellows and the ways in which they enriched the atmosphere at the seminaries they attended. A further report by the American Baptist Convention emphasized the distinctiveness of the Rockefeller Fellows, who unlike many other seminary students were decidedly not “church-bound products of a self perpetuating...
hard-core clerical caste and nourished in a
ghetto." The report continued: "It is one of
the strengths of the Rockefeller program that
it challenges that particular status quo." The
successful trial-year model was adopted by
other theological institutions, including Garrett
Seminary in Evanston. The

The Trial-Year Program continued to receive
strong support from the Rockefeller Brothers
Fund. In 1959 it increased its support of the
Trial-Year Program to $150,000 a year, allow-
ing the program to make around 60 awards
each year. In addition, beginning in 1964–65,
FTE secured funding from the Booth Ferris
Foundation in New York—its first significant
funding outside the Rockefeller family founda-
tions—to support additional Trial-Year Fellows
each year. In the 1965–66 academic year, with
small contributions from the Lutheran Church
in America and the Episcopal Church, the Trial-
Year Program was able to fund 72 fellowships.
Furthermore, nominations for the program
remained high. Describing the quality of the
program’s nominees in 1965, Wagoner referred
to it as “an embarrassment of riches,” which
he believed demonstrated the reputation
and success of the program over the years.
Denominational support for FTE was, however,
unaltered and remained the exception rather
than the norm throughout much of its history.

Challenges Facing the Protestant
Fellowship Program
The development of the Protestant Fellowship
Program faced much greater hurdles than the
continuance of the Trial-Year Program. In
1965, a consultation organized jointly by
the Hazen Foundation and FTE found that
the numbers of African-American seminary
students had continued to decline over the
preceding 25 years. Rooks, in his 1966 report
to the board, attributed this decline to three
major factors: 1) the difficulty in recruiting
African-American students from urban areas;
2) the indifference of the historically African-
American denominations to recruiting young
people to the ministry; and 3) the lack of
concern at most AATS seminaries to make
the recruitment of African-American students
a priority. Rooks estimated that FTE supported
approximately 10 percent of all African-
American students in seminary and sought
additional funds to expand the program. He
could point to a high level of success among
the program’s Fellows. Of those finished with
seminary, over three-quarters were engaged
in parish ministry; the others were almost all
involved with chaplaincy, doctoral work, or
church administration. Nevertheless, the pro-
gram remained an expensive one to administer.
Rooks calculated that it cost FTE one dollar
to give away two dollars in scholarship aid.

Other FTE Initiatives
FTE was able to pursue a number of new
initiatives in the 1960s. One of the most
important was the Ministerial Recruitment
Program, which grew out of the larger recruit-
ment efforts for the Fund’s fellowship programs.
The program typically sponsored dinners and
other events at college campuses across the
country that were designed to publicize minis-
terial careers to interested and often undecided
undergraduates. The program began informally
in the late 1950s with support from Winston
Paul. A small number of programs were also
funded by the Fund’s program budget. In
1964, FTE had secured major funding from
Booth Ferris for a national ministerial recruit-
ment program, which would be led on a part-
time basis by Robert P. Montgomery, chaplain
at Princeton University. This new program
was the only non-denominational recruitment
program of its kind.

The Fund also moved in some new directions.
At its inception in 1954, the primary concern
of the Fund had been maintaining the intellec-
tual quality of the ministry, but in the 1960s
new concerns were voiced about the spiritual
development of seminary students as well as
the community theological schools provided
for ministerial candidates. The Hopkins report
was critical of the lack of devotional communi-
ty at seminaries, especially the interdenomina-
tional schools. Wagoner described the spiritual
life at many Protestant seminaries as “bland,
stale, and archaic.” Out of his study of Roman
Catholic theological education, Wagoner
explicitly drew on the notion of spiritual forma-
tion as a model for Protestant seminaries.

At its inception in 1954, the primary concern of the
Fund had been maintaining the intellectual quality of the ministry, but in the 1960s new concerns were voiced about the spiritual development of seminary students.
In late 1965, the Fund brought a proposal to the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to support the Fund's new “The Spiritual and Devotional Life Program,” which was designed to encourage theological schools to strengthen religious life among faculty and students. The program awarded grants, which continued for four years, directly to the institutions for specific projects. The awards allowed institutions to develop colloquia on liturgy and worship, explore the presence of a Protestant spiritual director on campus, or plan retreats for faculty and students. Yorke Allen Jr. at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund was particularly interested in these new efforts to further spiritual development of seminarians.

Wagoner’s interest in Roman Catholicism also led to the Rome Ecumenical Seminar, the first summer program organized by FTE. In 1966, Wagoner published an article in which he argues that Protestant scholarship and training must become more ecumenical in its outlook, especially with regard to Roman Catholicism. In 1967, the board approved a program for the 15 Protestant seminarians in their senior year to spend several weeks in Rome at the North American College. It was hoped that the program would establish dialogue between future Protestant and Catholic leaders. It received funding from the Sealantic Fund, but the program was ended after only the second year.

When Wagoner departed in 1967, FTE was at its peak. He had presided over remarkable growth in the Fund’s programs. Across the board, the number of students in the fellowship programs was as high as it had ever been. His colleague Rooks had made remarkable progress in recruitment for the Protestant Fellowship Program, and in other areas FTE was able to experiment with new initiatives, including an urban ministry seminar for Fellows in Chicago. The Fund operated a national recruitment program for ministry. In these endeavors, FTE and Wagoner could often count on support from the Sealantic and Rockefeller Brothers funds. During his tenure, FTE never faced a severe financial crisis.

In 1967, C. Shelby Rooks replaced Wagoner as executive director of FTE and continued the growth of programs. In 1969, for instance, FTE instituted a new program for parish ministers that would allow them to spend a sabbatical engaged in scholarly work. One condition of the award, however, was that the recipient return to parish ministry. Funding for the program came from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. FTE also received national recognition, when a number of Trial-Year Fellows were featured on the award-winning CBS program, “Lamp Unto My Feet.” But Rooks, as executive director, also faced a series of new problems that would shape the direction of FTE’s programs in the coming years.

An Increase in Clergy
In the turbulent time of the late 1960s, news articles regularly cited a drop in regular church attendance. According to public opinion surveys, religious devotion appeared to be on the wane, and this decline was a source of concern to those involved in the Fund’s programs. Ironically, perhaps, enrollment at seminaries jumped significantly in the late 1960s. There is no one reason for this increase. It has been attributed widely to the draft, increasing numbers of women, and renewed interest in theology. As a consequence, however, the Fund found itself in a situation quite different from the 1950s. Rather than facing a lack of seminarians in a time of religious revival, Protestants now found themselves with a potential oversupply of seminarians at a time when major Protestant denominations were not growing quickly or at all. “Too Many Shepherds” read the title of one widely quoted article on the oversupply of clergy among Protestants.
New Challenges
In the late 1960s, the Fund also faced the retirement of many of its most active directors, who had been instrumental in the Fund’s work since its inception. When Nathan Pusey announced his resignation from the board in 1968, it caused a great deal of consternation among the FTE staff. As president of the most prominent university in the United States, Pusey was a major public figure, who, moreover, enjoyed the confidence of the Rockefeller family. In addition, Pusey had devoted a good deal of energy to the Fund’s work. He regularly sat on interview committees for the Trial-Year Program, and he was an active participant in the board’s deliberations. Pusey remained a friend of the Fund long after his retirement, but FTE was not able to recruit a public figure of his stature who was as committed to theological education.

Henry Pitney Van Dusen, one of the pillars of the Fund from its inception, resigned in 1969. By 1970, the only charter member remaining on the board was Benjamin Mays, who resigned the next year.

In the late 1960s, the Fund also faced increasing tuition costs for its scholarship programs, which diminished the number of fellowships that the programs could offer. The financial structure of theological education, particularly at the university-related institutions, increasingly emphasized loans rather than direct scholarship aid. This also challenged one of the Fund’s convictions that financial aid should not be a major factor in deciding whether Trial-Year Fellows would continue their theological studies.

Reevaluating FTE Programs
Rooks undertook a reevaluation of a number of the Fund’s programs. In 1968, the board voted to reopen the Trial-Year competitions to women. Rooks also took a careful look at the Rockefeller Doctoral Program. By 1968, the program had awarded 245 fellowships to leading doctoral students in the most prominent Ph.D. programs in religion. Unlike the Trial-Year Program, which had been the subject of numerous studies and evaluations by FTE staff, the doctoral program had not received the same level of scrutiny. By the late 1960s, it appeared that—far from a shortage—there were now too many Ph.D.s in religion. Moreover, it was difficult to assess the success of the Rockefeller Doctoral Fellowships. Although the explicit goal of the program was to support those with “unusual promise as theological school teachers and scholars,” no mechanism in the program encouraged this goal. And because the awards were made to those already in doctoral programs, the fellowships themselves could not serve a recruiting function.

Some members of the board expressed dissatisfaction with the program. Most of the program’s recipients did not teach at theological schools at all; two-thirds were drawn to the growing faculties of religious studies at colleges and universities. Even at Yale, one of the primary beneficiaries of the doctoral fellowships, the director of graduate studies questioned the efficacy of the program. With the Sealantic staff placing the future of the program in doubt, Rooks used this opportunity to press for a new doctoral program focused on African-American doctoral students.

The Launching of the Black Doctoral Program
Rooks undertook a study of African Americans in religious studies doctoral programs and found that, in 1968, only 18 were enrolled. Altogether, according to Rooks’ investigation, only 40 African Americans held Ph.D.s in religion. To raise the profile of African Americans in theological education, Rooks recognized it would be necessary to have African-American scholars represented in all fields of theology.

Rooks and W. Robert Martin Jr., who had become associate director in 1967, developed a new fellowship program that built on the older Rockefeller Doctoral Fellowships but differed in significant ways. First, the new Rockefeller Doctoral Fellowships were designed to support two years of doctoral study instead of the usual one, and they also allowed for a third year of support when completing the dissertation. In
place of a committee dominated by representatives of the leading doctoral programs, they proposed broad-based selection committees. Finally, Rooks and Martin introduced a personal interview as part of the application.¹⁰¹

The FTE board enthusiastically supported the new program, which won funding from the Sealantic Fund for twelve scholars each year, beginning in 1970–71. The Black Doctoral Program would become one of the most influential programs of FTE and would profoundly shape African-American theological education.

67. Wagoner also urged the non- and interdenominational schools to make their curricula more responsive to denominational concerns and requirements. Ibid., p. 517.
68. See, for instance, the article in the July 1957 Harper’s by James B. Moore, entitled, “Why Young Ministers are Leaving the Church.” See also the article by Al Balk, “Why I Quit the Ministry,” Saturday Evening Post, November 17, 1962.
72. At Harvard, J. Lawrence Burkholder concluded, “We feel that the program is fulfilling its stated purposes. Furthermore, we feel that the Rockefeller Fellows have had the general effect of lifting the level of academic and spiritual life at Harvard.” Report from Burkholder, July 30, 1962. Union FTE, 17/27. An additional report from 1962 is available from Union Seminary, FTE Box 17/27. Both institutions indicated that Rockefeller Fellows were above average intellectually. Union estimated that just under half of all Fellows at Union went on to complete their seminary education, and the number at Harvard was comparable. A third report was commissioned from Yale but is not among the records currently catalogued at Union.
74. Union FTE 04/55–56, Reports of the executive director from September 12, 1959; February 27, 1960; and 1965.
75. Nominations remained well over 500 through most of the 1960s. Trial Year Statistics, FTE archives, uncatalogued.
80. Union FTE 04/12, Minutes from March 7, 1964.
83. “Uneasy Aggiornamento: The Changing Profile of the American Protestant Seminaries,” Christian Scholar 50 (Summer 1967), pp. 129–136. Wagoner was one of the first to apply the notion of spiritual formation to the Protestant seminary context.
84. The initial proposal was for $150,000, of which the Sealantic Fund originally funded only $50,000. FTE 17/20, Letter from Dana Creel to Van Dusen, December 14, 1965.
85. FTE 17/20, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.
87. He argues, “The American Protestant scholarly community must do more to encourage and prepare its graduate students and theological faculties to respond to a wider range of scholarly challenges, particularly those offered by Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Response to such a challenge will mean that the city of Rome will be a prime center for such study, perhaps the center.” Walter D. Wagoner, “Rome for the Protestant Scholar,” Theological Education 2 (1966), p. 84.
88. The seminar was noteworthy enough to be described in the New York Times, September 2, 1967, p. 15.
89. In September 1968, immediately following the second ecumenical seminar, the board voted to discontinue participation in the program. Union FTE 04/17, Minutes; Minutes, FTE, September 1968. Rooks commented, “Unfortunately, the study programs designed for the group were never substantive enough to justify continuing the program beyond two years.” Rooks, p. 26.
90. Wagoner left to become associate dean at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley. The federation of seminaries in the GTU was also supported by the Sealantic Fund. Weber, p. 174. Later, Wagoner became director of the Boston Theological Institute, a consortium of Boston area theological schools that also received support from the Sealantic Fund. Later in his career, Wagoner returned to the parish and led the nondenominational Round Hill Community Church in Connecticut. He retired in 1987 and died in 1998.
92. The show aired on October 19, 1969, and was described as “a study of the role of the minister in contemporary America and the state of religion in the U.S.” New York Times, October 19, 1969, p. D25.
93. Polls citing decreases in church attendance in the late 1960s were of concern to Allen. RBFA, Series 3, Box 248 FTE #16.
95. In Pusey’s place, the board recruited Robert Goheen, president of Princeton University. Goheen did not show the same commitment to FTE and resigned from its board within a few years.
96. Wagoner noted that, despite the ease of administering the program, it was difficult to evaluate. He noted several of the problems, including the oversupply of Ph.D.s in religion and the relatively low rate (33 percent) of those teaching at theological schools who had graduated. Wagoner, however, wanted to wait until the end of the program to conduct a major evaluation. Union FTE, 04/56 Report of the Executive Director, March 1967.
97. In a February 27, 1968, letter to Rooks, Yorke Allen Jr. of the Sealantic Fund cited the clear evidence of oversupply of doctorates in religion as one reason that FTE’s request to undertake a study of the doctoral program was denied by Sealantic. Implicitly, Yorke signaled that Sealantic would be unlikely to renew the grant in its present form.
98. At the 1967 board meeting, Henry Pitney Van Dusen questioned the relevancy of many dissertations awarded fellowships, exclaiming, “What we don’t need is another thesis on the work of Paul Tillich.” Rooks, p. 118.
99. Julian Hartt saw the departments of religious studies at colleges and universities outbidding seminaries for recent Ph.D.s. He concluded in his letter to Allen at the Sealantic Fund, “I do not think it is clear that theological education has been measurably strengthened by the [doctoral] program.” Letter from April 10, 1969. FTE 17/21, 100. Rooks, p. 120. He especially emphasized the need for African-American biblical scholars, of which there were only five in 1968.
New Funding Realities

The reluctance of the Sealantic Fund to support the previous Rockefeller Doctoral Program beyond 1969–1970 signaled a change in the relationship between FTE and the Rockefeller foundations. Until the early 1970s, the Fund was dependent on the Sealantic and Rockefeller Brothers funds for the bulk of its work. While the Fund received some minor support from two denominations and somewhat more substantial grants from the Booth Ferris Foundation, it enjoyed a special relationship with Sealantic and RBF. The archives of the two organizations indicate that the FTE staff consulted with Yorke Allen Jr. and Dana Creel about even minor matters of the programs. Moreover, the Rockefeller name was closely tied to almost all the Fund’s programs. In a 1970 memo to Creel and Allen, Rooks notes, “In the minds of the public (theological educators, students, churches, etc.), FTE is regarded as an enterprise of the Rockefeller family. At least 80 percent of FTE’s support is derived from Rockefeller sources. The Trial-Year Fellows are still regarded largely as ‘Rockefellers.’”

When the Booth Ferris Foundation abruptly ended funding for FTE after the 1970–71 academic year, FTE’s financial situation became precarious. FTE had no endowment or significant income of any kind other than annual foundation support. Rooks noted that the uncommitted balance of FTE’s funds would drop to nearly zero without the Booth Ferris grants to offset operating costs. Knowing that the Sealantic Fund would be winding down its operations in the coming years, Rooks appealed to the Rockefeller Brothers Fund for additional support. The RBF added a modest amount to its support of the Trial-Year Program for 1971–72, but it deferred any decision on taking a greater role in the Fund’s work. It also appeared less willing to cover unanticipated expenses encountered by the Fund, which had been routine at an earlier point in the Fund’s history. In the place of Booth Ferris funds, FTE was able to secure some additional funding. The Andrew Mellon Foundation stepped in with a major grant to support the Fund’s programs, primarily the Trial-Year Program and ministerial recruitment. Nevertheless, the reports of the executive director in the early 1970s reflect the financial problems that the organization encountered for the first time in its history, problems exacerbated by increases in tuition and operating costs.

In 1973, the Fund learned that, after the 1975–76 academic year, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund would no longer support the Trial-Year Program. Although Yorke Allen Jr. remained a strong supporter of FTE, many of the trustees of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund clearly felt that the foundation had supported the Trial-Year Program and FTE long enough. Indeed, amid continuing reports of an oversupply of Protestant clergy, the issue of ministerial recruitment did not capture the public interest as it had in the 1950s or early 1960s. The same year, the decision of the Sealantic Fund to cease activity and combine its remaining assets with the Rockefeller Brothers Fund made it clear that FTE must change its operations substantially in the future or disband.
To carry out its mission, FTE needed to secure support from a broad spectrum of foundations, develop corporate and individual donors, and increase contributions from denominational sources.

New Priorities
The FTE board empowered a special committee to explore the future of FTE beyond 1976, when most funding from Sealantic and RBF would cease. The committee set a series of new priorities. In particular, it affirmed the place of FTE's programs for African-American students at the ministerial and doctoral level. It voted to continue exploration with Catholic officials of a Trial-Year Program for Roman Catholic students.

The biggest shift in priorities proposed by the committee was the termination of the existing Trial-Year Program after 1976, when support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund would cease. In its place the committee proposed a new fellowship program that would support students both committed and uncommitted to Christian ministry. Unlike the Trial-Year awards, these new awards would also be renewable. In addition, the fellowships would be accompanied by a corresponding ministerial recruitment program. The committee also proposed pursuing an internship program for seminary students between their second and third years of study.

The Trial-Year Program had been the center of FTE's work for nearly 20 years, and at first the staff resisted the committee's recommendation and lobbied to retain it. The board, however, was convinced that the Trial-Year Program was so closely linked to the Rockefeller foundations that other funding sources would be reluctant to support it in the future. Its termination also represented new realities for Protestant churches of the 1970s. The nature of the “oversupply” of clergy was perhaps debatable, but the critical shortage of ministers that had deeply worried theological educators in the 1950s and early 1960s was no longer an issue.

The trial-year concept itself had waned in higher education. The Woodrow Wilson Fellowships— the original model for the program— had ended in 1968. Furthermore, the Trial-Year Program had always had its detractors, for whom the program seemed to reward indecision about ministry rather than commitment. Others saw it as elitist and anti-denominational, especially because most of the recipients so often attended elite institutions without strong denominational affiliation. In addition, the program's success was questionable. Approximately 55 percent of the Trial-Year Fellows would complete their seminary education, but the number who would actually serve in parish ministry was substantially less. In an era of sober financial realities, the Trial-Year Program appeared to be a luxury that FTE could no longer afford.

New Ministerial Programs for Fellows and Undergraduates
The FTE that emerged in the mid-1970s differed from the previous organization in some fundamental ways. Shelby Rooks, who had been with the Fund for 14 years, resigned in 1974 to become president of Chicago Theological Seminary. Rooks had seen enormous changes in theological education, and he remained proudest of FTE's programs for African Americans. This legacy continued under Rooks’ successor, W. Robert Martin Jr., who made the African-American programs central to the Fund’s work, while at the same time establishing new programs. To survive, however, FTE had to make fund-raising an essential part of the organization’s work. This involved an enormous change in the work of the FTE staff and board. To carry out its mission, FTE needed to secure support from a broad spectrum of foundations, develop corporate and individual donors, and increase contributions from denominational sources. FTE’s successes and failures in this regard would largely determine its effectiveness in the coming years.

In 1976, the new North American Ministerial Fellowships Program replaced the Trial-Year Program. These scholarships broadened the vision of the Trial-Year Program to include both those students who were committed to ministry and those who were undecided but giving serious consideration to a ministerial career. Unlike the previous Trial-Year Program, however, the North American awards could be renewed for an additional two years, provided the student could demonstrate ample academic strength and was, at a minimum, engaged in the process of becoming an official candidate for ministry in his or her denomination. The program was open to students in all denominations, including Roman Catholicism.
In 1976, two new programs were initiated to support Hispanic students engaged in theological study.

In contrast to the Trial-Year Program, which awarded fellowships without regard to need, the new program based the award on financial need. In almost all cases, the overall amount of the fellowships was substantially less. This was understandable in light of the financial exigencies of the time, but it also changed the impact of the award and the relation of the Fellow to the host institution. Among students, the new program proved popular. In its first year, the program received 667 nominations and was able to award 96 fellowships. Nearly half of the recipients (45) were women, which reflected the growing opportunities for women in theological education as well as the high quality of many women studying for the ministry. The North American Fellowships were promising, but securing funding to support fellowships at this level proved elusive in coming years.

Accompanying the fellowship program was the North American Ministerial Recruitment Program. This continued the Fund’s work begun in the 1960s to interest undergraduates in ministry by organizing events on college campuses around the United States and Canada. It was considered a vital adjunct to the fellowship programs by making students aware of the possibilities of Christian ministry and developing networks of college faculty and administrators who would direct students to seminary study and careers in ministry. It was the only non-denominational recruitment program of its kind. FTE hoped in particular to receive significant denominational support for this program.

After 1976, the Fund’s two programs for African Americans were renamed but underwent few changes, despite the new sources of funding. The Protestant Fellowship Program became the Special Opportunity Fellowships for Blacks in Ministry, and the Rockefeller Doctoral Fellowships were renamed the Special Opportunity Fellowships for Blacks in Doctoral Study. Lilly Endowment underwrote much of these programs and provided consistent support for them during the next two decades.

In 1978, the ministerial program was renamed the Benjamin E. Mays Scholarships for Ministry in honor of Mays, who was a charter board member and long-time advocate of the Fund’s involvement in African-American issues. The same year, the doctoral program became the Doctoral Scholarships for the Study of Religion for Black North Americans.

Hispanics in Theological Education

The reorganization of the Fund’s programs allowed it to address new areas of concern in theological education. Using its successful programs for the support of African-American ministry as a model, it began in 1974 to consider the question of Hispanics in theological education. During the mid-1970s, very few Hispanic students were enrolled in ministerial programs in North America. According to the 1975 ATS Factbook on Theological Education, only 336 Hispanic students were at member institutions of the ATS, a situation analogous to that of African Americans in 1960.

In 1976, two new programs were initiated to support Hispanic students engaged in theological study: the Special Opportunity Fellowships for Hispanics in Ministry and the Special Opportunity for Doctoral Study of Religion for Hispanic Americans. Funding for these programs came from a variety of foundations, including Lilly, Booth Ferris, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, but assuring consistent support for Hispanic programs proved difficult in the coming years. The FTE staff, which was less well equipped to deal with Hispanic programs, hired Rubén Armendáriz on a part-time basis to manage its Hispanic programs, but the Fund had difficulty recruiting candidates.

Continued Financial Challenges

FTE’s programs appeared quite strong immediately after their reorganization in 1976. Indeed, in the 1976–77 academic year, the Fund awarded 182 fellowships, the highest number in its history. Moreover, it had support from more funding sources than ever before. But long-term problems remained unsolved, the most important of which was consistent funding. In 1976, during the reorganization, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation made a large grant to FTE of $180,000 to support administrative
costs and explore new ways of becoming financially secure over the next three years. In addition, Lilly Endowment contributed $25,000 for the Fund’s development efforts.\textsuperscript{117} The Andrew Mellon Fund provided the bulk of the funds for the North American fellowships and recruitment program, but the prospects of continued funding from Mellon beyond 1979 were slim.\textsuperscript{118} FTE received a significant bequest from the estate of Winston Paul, which it applied to its current programs.\textsuperscript{119} The only consistent funding for the Fund’s initiatives came from Lilly Endowment’s support for the two African-American fellowships.\textsuperscript{120}

In a number of areas, the Fund’s development efforts fell short. The Fund hoped that denominations would recognize the value of the new North American fellowships and recruitment program and become major supporters of it. Significant denominational support failed to materialize.\textsuperscript{121} Denominations had their own financial difficulties, and FTE’s non-denominational character made the denominations perhaps less willing to contribute. Furthermore, individual gifts and corporate donations lagged behind expectations. FTE had some success raising donations from former Fellows. It raised $16,555 during its first campaign in 1977, a number that would grow over the next five years.\textsuperscript{122} But larger gifts remained elusive. The reorganization put new emphasis on fund-raising by the board members themselves, a transition that was not always easy. In his 1977 report to the FTE board, Martin chided the directors for not taking a more active role in financial development.\textsuperscript{123} Lack of board-generated giving remained a consistent criticism of Martin’s until he resigned from FTE in 1982.

When Charles Williams became president of the Fund in 1980, he recognized FTE’s future promise as well as the significant financial challenges facing the organization.\textsuperscript{124} A year earlier, the board commissioned a study from Carl Shaver on the Fund’s financial future. The Shaver report confirmed the positive image of the Fund’s work among constituents and potential donors, but it also detailed criticisms of the Fund’s organization. Some objected that it had grown too large and unwieldy—while others pointed to the high administrative costs of its programs and recruiting. As a consequence, not enough of FTE’s budget went directly into student stipends.\textsuperscript{125} FTE’s programs were expensive to administer, but the personal interviews with candidates, the frequent travel of staff to events at colleges and universities around the country, and its publications were part of the reason that FTE had been so successful in the past. The Shaver report foresaw the increasingly dire financial situation of the Fund in the early 1980s, but the board generally did not follow the report’s recommendations.\textsuperscript{126}

**FTE Scales Back**

In the early 1980s, without endowment income to fall back on or sufficient sources of outside funding, FTE was forced to curtail its programs. The North American program offered fewer fellowships each year. In 1981–82, it reduced new awards to only eight. The next year, no new fellowships were made. The North American recruitment program also grew more modest. These two programs represented the public face of FTE to many colleges, denominations, and seminaries, and their decline lessened the public presence of FTE. Robert Martin resigned in 1982 after 15 years with FTE. He had shepherded the Fund through a difficult transitional period after the loss of Rockefeller funding and struggled to find the financial support to maintain and expand its programs. His departure marked a break in the organization’s continuity. William DeVeaux, associate director since 1980 and a former Fellow, took over from Martin as executive director. Because of persistent budget shortfalls, DeVeaux was forced to scale back operations significantly. Neither of the two associate director positions was filled, and support staff was reduced to two. The North American recruitment program was terminated, field interviews with candidates curtailed and the North American and Hispanic fellowship programs vastly reduced. The bright spot among the Fund’s programs remained the Benjamin E. Mays ministerial fellowships and the Black Doctoral Program, which remained fully funded by Lilly Endowment.\textsuperscript{127}
DeVeaux was able to rebuild the Fund’s programs slowly, albeit on a reduced scale. In 1983–84, new fellowships were again offered in the North American program, and beginning in 1984–85, support from the Henry Luce Foundation allowed FTE to offer additional North American fellowships as one-year, non-renewable grants.

Increasing Diversity of Fellows

In 1985, with the encouragement of trustee Jean Fairfax, FTE began its first program specifically directed at women: the Fairfax-Muskiwinni Scholarships for Black Women. These offered scholarships for African-American women engaged in the study of religion at the doctoral level. Under DeVeaux’s leadership, FTE had also commissioned a landmark study by Justo González of Hispanic theological education. In 1985, on the basis of a new fund-raising report, FTE planned to launch a major capital campaign that would aim to raise over $3 million. During the 1980s, the FTE board had become much more diverse, including many more women and people of color among its ranks. When DeVeaux announced his resignation in late 1985 to accept the pastorate at Wayman Chapel AME church in Dayton, FTE had experienced a number of encouraging years and hopeful signs. Nevertheless, the financial situation remained extremely tight.

A New Home in New York

In May 1986, the FTE board selected J. Oscar McCloud, an official of the United Presbyterian Church (USA), as executive director. McCloud set about reorganizing the work of FTE. He moved the Fund’s offices to New York to be part of the Interchurch Center on Riverside Drive. Chief among McCloud’s reasons was a connection of FTE to the denominations, many of which had offices at the Interchurch Center.

He also aggressively pursued new sources of funding for FTE’s programs. In the summer of 1987, McCloud convened an FTE consultation on urban ministry, drawing seminary educators, urban ministers, community leaders, and denominational representatives to examine the challenges of urban ministry and develop new initiatives. Out of this emerged a new initiative for FTE, the Urban Ministry Program, which had two major components: One provided fellowships for seminary students to pursue internships in urban settings established by FTE, and the second allowed individual clergy and ministry teams in urban settings to design continuing education programs funded by FTE. The $2.3 million grant by Lilly Endowment was the largest single grant received by FTE. In 1988, Walter Schenk was hired as associate director of the new urban ministry programs, which began offering fellowships in the 1989–90 academic year.

McCloud was also able to build on Gonzalez’s work, the first major study of Hispanic theological education in North America. Gonzalez noted that, although many groups wanted to help Hispanics, few wanted to learn much about them. FTE used the rich information in Gonzalez’s study as the basis for a new grant proposal to support Hispanic ministerial and doctoral fellowships as well as an innovative series of summer institutes. Until that point, the Fund’s Hispanic programs had never had consistent support from year to year, nor had they afforded the numbers of scholarships that would make a national impact. In 1988, the Pew Charitable Trusts, which had funded the earlier Gonzalez study, made a large grant to support Hispanic ministerial and doctoral initiatives. The board chose Benjamin Alicea, a former FTE Fellow, as associate director of the Hispanic programs.

In the late 1980s, FTE could count a number of successes. Lilly Endowment awarded FTE a $75,000 grant to support its fund-raising operations and the hiring of a development officer. In 1989, a trust established by Winston Paul also made an unexpected contribution of $284,000 to the Fund. FTE trustee Sylvia Sanders Kelley pledged $150,000 to FTE for the support of women’s leadership. In addition, when the Pew Charitable Trusts renewed the Hispanic Ministry program, they substantially increased their support, allowing FTE to award more fellowships. Lilly Endowment continued its longstanding support of the Fund’s African-American programs with the backing of its vice president, Robert Lynn. Giving from individuals, congregations, and denominations also
increased in this period. In 1991–92, FTE offered 196 awards, the largest number in its history. From 1986 to 1992, FTE’s income had gone from $493,000 to more than $1.8 million—at least a three-fold increase, even accounting for inflation. FTE convened a consultation on Asian ministry in 1993 with an eye to expanding its programs in that direction.

**Persistent Financial Problems**

But in the early 1990s, underneath these successes, persistent problems in financial oversight and personnel clouded the Fund’s growth, and the expansion of its programs became increasingly precarious.

In its 1992 Annual Report, FTE reported expenses outrunning income by over $191,000. In late 1992, a consultant to the Fund reported that FTE had a negative unrestricted fund balance, which he predicted would continue if drastic steps were not taken. As a consequence, the Fund began to lose the confidence of the granting agencies upon whom it depended for most of its operations. FTE never had significant resources of its own that could sustain its programs without the support of outside foundations. Individual donations to the Fund went largely to cover current operating expenses, and the North American program, which relied heavily on unrestricted gifts, ended abruptly after the 1992–93 academic year. Lilly chose not to renew the urban ministry program after 1992–93.

In 1994, shortly after the Fund celebrated its 40th anniversary, it had become apparent that Lilly and Pew would not renew the remaining four major scholarship programs. The Hispanic ministry program ended after the 1994–95 academic year. Dissatisfaction spread among some of the Fund’s trustees. In 1995, Sylvia Sanders Kelley withdrew her pledge in support of women’s leadership. Funds were committed for the African-American ministerial and doctoral programs and for the Hispanic doctoral program for the 1995-96 academic year, but the income available to FTE was inadequate to continue further operations, even on a much smaller scale.

Confidential inquiries on the part of the board indicated that the major foundations favorably disposed to FTE’s goals no longer had faith in the organization’s abilities to manage these programs even if the Fund could weather the current financial crisis. In the spring of 1995, the board voted to close the Fund’s office and operations in September and affiliate with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Joining with ATS allowed FTE to avoid legal dissolution and retain its remaining assets and endowment funds. In May 1996, the New York Attorney General approved the affiliation.

Managed on a part-time basis by the staff of the ATS, the Black Doctoral Program continued utilizing some unexpended funds from Lilly Endowment and other contributions on a much-abbreviated scale. The Hispanic Summer Program continued under the auspices of La Asociacion para la Educacion Teologica Hispana and the leadership of Justo Gonzalez. In 1996, the Hispanic Theological Initiative (HTI) was formed with support from the Pew Charitable Trusts to provide scholarship programs for Hispanic ministerial and doctoral students.
102. In 1969–70, The Lutheran Church in America and the Episcopal Church contributed $3,000 and $7,500 respectively to the Trial-Year Program. Booth Ferris contributed $60,000 for the Trial-Year Program and $23,000 for the national recruitment program. The Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Sealantic contributed $420,000 to the Fund's programs.

103. Union FTE 07/21, memo from November 13, 1970.

104. Union FTE 07/21, memo from November 13, 1970.


107. The initial grant was for $150,000. Union FTE 04/56, Report of the Executive Director, April 1971.


111. For instance, in the last year of the Trial-Year Program (1975–76), awards for those attending Harvard Divinity School were $5,206 for unmarried students. In the first year of the North American Fellowships (1976–1977), awards for students at the same school varied from $1,800 to $3,500, with most falling between $2,000 and $2,500.


113. In 1976–77, Martin estimated that the program had involved 600 college faculty and administrators, 200 chaplains and pastors, and over 1,100 students in its events. Union FTE 04/57, 1977 Report of the Executive Director.


115. Initial funding for the Hispanic ministry program came from Lilly and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. The doctoral program was funded by Booth Ferris and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Summary of Grants, 1976 and 1977.

116. Unlike the Fund's other programs, which were highly competitive, the Hispanic program only received 21 applications for 15 fellowships in 1976–77. Union FTE 02/06. Report of the Special Associate Director, April 29, 1976. Armendáriz left the Fund in the summer of 1976.


118. Nathan Pusey, president of the Andrew Mellon Foundation, had been a good friend to the Fund, but he made it clear that after his retirement, the board would probably not be as well disposed to supporting the FTE. Union FTE 02/01. Rooks, “Report on Foundation Visits” [1973]. Pusey retired in 1975. For the period of 1976–79, Mellon made a grant of $450,000 to the Fund, primarily for the North American Theological Fellowships.

119. FTE received $450,000 from Paul's estate. It was decided to disburse the funds over five years with $60,000 devoted to the North American fellowships, $20,000 for ministerial recruitment, and $10,000 for administrative expenses. Union FTE 02/11. Report of the Executive Director, autumn 1977.

120. Martin reported to the board in 1977 that Lilly Endowment did not consider its grants for the Benjamin E. Mays or Black doctoral program to be “terminal grants.” At the same time, Martin recognized that Lilly wanted FTE to develop other sources of funding for these programs.

Union FTE, 02/11. Report of the Executive Director, 1977. Lilly's support for the Benjamin E. Mays program would continue until the mid-1990s, when it was terminated. Lilly Endowment support for the African-American doctoral program continues into FTE's 50th year.

121. The United Methodist Church provided the most support, with $12,000 per year committed to the North American fellowships from 1976-1982. It also supported the recruitment program with $2,000 each year from 1977 to 1979.


123. Martin wrote, “I have become discouraged, at times, about the slowness of the Board to assume [financial] responsibilities that are not only appropriate, but essential for the leadership of The Fund on this page of history.” Union FTE 02/11. Report of the Executive Director, 1977.

124. Williams wrote, “As the Fund begins its twenty-sixth year, it is entering a critical phase of testing the real financial resources available for its long-term development. This will be no easy challenge. Even though The Fund is an absolutely unique institution, it is positioned just beyond the interests of most funding agencies; and by virtues of its unique status as servant of the church The Fund is constrained from building a broadly-based constituency of its own.” FTE 4/47.


126. The recommendations included 1) reconstituting the board as a much larger entity of up to 48 members. The members would be composed almost entirely of lay people who could generate significant contributions for FTE; 2) recruiting a national network of 300 clergy and lay people who could make donations of $1,000 annually; and 3) recruiting a full-time development officer to The FTE staff. Shaver did not believe foundations or corporations would provide enough funding to secure the Fund's future and de-emphasized both of these. FTE 4/59.
On the negative reaction to the Shaver report see Report of the Executive Director 1980.

127. The Black Doctoral Program received a very positive evaluation in 1981, which confirmed Lilly’s support for the program. FTE 2/24. Lilly was, however, interested in building broader support for the African-American programs and established a challenge grant for that purpose in the early 1980s.

128. From 1985–1989, the FTE offered four to six awards each year. Financial support for the program came from the Fairfax-Muskiwinni Foundation.


130. The feasibility study was conducted by Marts and Lundy. The report recommended that the Fund hire a full-time development officer, increase significantly its annual giving, and establish an endowment in order to offset the vagaries of foundation support. Report dated November 1985. (Uncatalogued FTE archives.)


132. One of McCloud’s preconditions for accepting the position was the willingness of the board to consider moving FTE offices from Princeton. Undated memo from March 1987.


134. In the summer institutes, Hispanic students from around the country would be taught by Latino and Latina professors.

135. González points out the limitations of the previous FTE Hispanic programs, The Theological Education of Hispanics, pp. 106–116.


138. Report by Larry Doss, dated December 16, 1992. (Uncataloged FTE archives.) The unrestricted fund balance would have been much more severe had FTE not received a $284,000 contribution from the Winston Paul estate in the late 1980s.

139. HTI was originally affiliated with the Candler School of Theology of Emory University. In 1999 it moved to the campus of Princeton Theological Seminary. HTI currently offers a limited number of fellowships for doctoral studies, and the future of its fellowship programs is unclear.
Renewed Interest in Theological Education and the New FTE

The 1990s also saw renewed concern for the state of Christian ministry.

Many of the problems that contributed to FTE’s collapse in 1995 had been accumulating since the mid-1970s, when the Rockefeller funding ceased. In some respects, it is surprising that the Fund lasted as long as it did—its successes are a tribute to the efforts of the Fund’s staff and board to adjust FTE’s course where necessary, maintain programs and adapt to the conditions that were less favorable to funding theological education.

In the first 20 years of its existence, the Fund could focus on programmatic issues almost exclusively; the second 20 years were dominated by the struggle to secure adequate funding. One consequence was that reflection on broader issues facing ministry receded and the organization was less able to respond to new challenges. Lack of funding, loss of a clear vision, and organizational missteps left the future of FTE in question.

The suspension of almost all the Fund’s programs after 1995 provided an opportunity for FTE to evaluate carefully its role in theological education. Theological education had changed enormously since the Fund began its operations in 1954. The seminary population grew from 28,000 in 1954 to well over 66,000 in 1995. Moreover, the composition of the seminary students changed significantly. Seminary education in the 1950s was almost exclusively male; by the late 1990s, women constituted approximately a third of all theological students, and at most mainline Protestant seminaries they made up roughly half of the student body. The increasing presence of women constituted one of the greatest demographic changes in ministry since the Protestant Reformation and presented theological education with an array of new challenges and opportunities.

Theological education grew more diverse in other ways. The number of African-American students grew from just over one percent in 1960 to nearly 9.2 percent in 1995–1996, although they remain underrepresented as a proportion of the population. Hispanic students increased their numbers as well, although not as dramatically. The background and experience of theological students also changed. Many candidates for ministry were no longer attending seminary soon after college; instead, they came to theological education after having first pursued other careers. By the mid-1990s, the average age of theological students pursuing ministerial degrees had risen to 35 from around 25 in 1960. A significant portion of these were also part-time students. The financial picture for theological students had also changed dramatically since the Fund began its work. Many of the assumptions of the early initiators for the Fund were no longer applicable to theological education as a whole.

Renewed Concerns for Christian Ministry

As the profile of students in theological seminaries changed, the 1990s also saw renewed concern for the state of Christian ministry that paralleled concerns of the 1950s. In 1989, New York Times reporter Peter Steinfels described the shortage of ministers in many denominations and the alarm it caused among many church officials. Other publications registered concern over the quality of those entering the ministry, echoing sentiments of the
1950s. Roy M. Oswald cited the “crisis” in recruitment for ministry. For Oswald, the issue was less a matter of the actual numbers of theological students than the number of students who could be effective clergy, which he considered insufficient. Public concerns about the ministry continued to reverberate throughout the 1990s.

The renewed concern for the ministerial profession was reflected in the endeavors of philanthropic organizations. The extensive Pulpit & Pew project at Duke University, funded by Lilly Endowment, sponsored a series of research and publication efforts focused on strengthening Christian leadership, especially the ministry. When its projects are complete, its work will constitute the first comprehensive study of the ministry since the 1950s, when Carnegie supported the examination of theological education and the ministry in the series of studies led by H. Richard Niebuhr. In 2002, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching also launched a major investigation into theological education as preparation for ministry. Its findings will be published in the coming years.

Lilly Endowment emerged as the most important philanthropic organization for strengthening the Christian ministry in this period. Lilly Endowment had a long history of supporting theological education, and it had underwritten a number of FTE programs since the mid-1970s. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Endowment began expanding its programs in religion. In 1988, it committed $5 million to attracting better-qualified candidates to the ministry. Ten years later, the Endowment awarded over 10 times that amount to theological institutions to strengthen their programs for calling and training congregational ministers. The financial resources of Lilly Endowment and its dedication to strengthening theological education and congregational leadership created a propitious atmosphere for a renewed Fund for Theological Education.

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144. Factbook on Theological Education for the Academic Year 1996–97, edited by Jonathan Strom and Daniel Aleshire (Pittsburgh: ATS, 1997), p. 27; and Niebuhr, The Advancement of Theological Education, p. 23. The 66,000 figure is a low estimate because it does not include Jewish institutions or Christian seminaries unaffiliated with ATS.
146. For recent figures and detailed analysis see Barbara G. Wheeler, “Is There a Problem? Theological Students and Religious Leadership for the Future,” Auburn Studies, No. 8, July 2001, p. 5. Precise historical figures on average student age are not available, but John C. Fletcher estimated that the average age in 1960 was 25 and by the early 1980s had risen to 30. John C. Fletcher, The Future of Protestant Seminaries (Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1983), p. 47. Wheeler notes that the comparative average ages for medical and law school were 24 and 26 respectively. Wheeler, p. 5.
149. Roy M. Oswald, Finding Leaders for Tomorrow’s Churches: The Growing Crisis in Clergy Recruitment (Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1993), pp. 54, 87. Oswald is equivocal about the nature of a statistical undersupply or oversupply of clergy and cites the contrasting situations of various denominations. Nevertheless, Oswald registers deep concerns about the problems of Protestants in recruiting bright young men and women to the ministry. Ibid., pp. 81–88.
146. For further information, see http://www.pulpitandpew.duke.edu.
147. The new study examines preparation for the ministry among Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish religious bodies. The project is part of its larger initiative, “Preparations for the Professions.” For more information, see http://www.carnegiefoundation.org.
IN 1997, under the leadership of James L. Waits, then executive director of ATS and president of the FTE board of trustees, a new and much smaller board of trustees began explorations of the Fund’s future. With financial support from Lilly Endowment and the encouragement and counsel of its Vice President, Craig Dykstra, Waits and the board sponsored a series of consultations on the future of FTE.

These included discussions with denominational leaders, foundation officials, and theological educators about the shape and purpose of a new Fund for Theological Education. The consultations guided FTE as it envisioned new programs and approached foundations for the financial support necessary to launch new initiatives.

With a vision for a renewed FTE, Waits secured a major grant from Lilly Endowment, as well as grants from the Henry Luce Foundation, Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, Booth Ferris Foundation, and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation to launch the Fund’s programs again. In 1997, Waits resigned as executive director of ATS to work with the Fund full-time. He began recruiting a professional staff to develop and manage the Fund’s new programs, and in the summer of 1998 the Fund reopened its offices in the Luce Center on the campus of Emory University in Atlanta.

Returning to the original emphases of the Fund in the 1950s, the FTE board decided to focus on improving two interrelated areas: quality and diversity of the ministry. One area that continued to receive strong support was the African-American doctoral program. The Fund had a number of excellent studies demonstrating the value of its programs in this area since launching them in 1969–1970.

During the 1990s, African Americans continued to be vastly underrepresented on theological faculties in North America, and FTE support had been crucial for many African Americans now teaching at ATS institutions. Further support for the training of African-American Ph.D.s in religion was crucial if theological institutions wanted to continue diversifying their faculties.

In Innovative Approaches

In a major departure from previous practice, the board did not return to the traditional scholarship awards offered by the Fund at the ministerial level. Previously, the Fund’s programs had focused on financial awards that were meant to defray the direct costs of theological education, and these formed the core of the Fund’s programs during its first 40 years.

The continuing financial need of many individual theology students was not a matter of dispute. Rather, it was a question of the effectiveness of these programs. Over the years, the Fund’s awards, as a percentage of tuition, had declined, significantly lessening their impact for both the institution and the student. Moreover, the Fund’s fellowships for individuals, which covered only a portion of their tuition, sometimes had the unintended consequence of reducing financial aid awards from the student’s institution, thereby further diluting their effect. In addition, few studies conducted by the Fund in recent years had documented the effectiveness of these programs in improving quality.
the overall quality or diversity of theological education. Consequently, the Fund sought new ways other than a traditional scholarship program to enrich the seminary experience. The shift in focus allowed FTE to direct its attention in new and creative directions.

With the strong financial backing of the foundations, Waits began building a professional staff to develop and implement the Fund’s new programs. In 1998, Dr. Sharon Watson Fluker came to the Fund from the University of Rochester to direct the new doctoral programs. The same year, Melissa Wiginton, a theologian and former lawyer, joined the Fund to direct its new initiatives at the undergraduate and master’s levels. The hiring of Fluker and Wiginton marked a new era in the Fund’s history, as they became the first women to assume leadership for the Fund’s programs. Waits also engaged a full-time director of development. In 2001, Jack Gilbert, an Emory University development officer, became FTE’s vice president for advancement. For the first time in nearly 20 years, the Fund found itself with a full complement of professional staff and on secure financial footing.

FTE’s work coalesced around two major initiatives: the Partnership for Excellence and Expanding Horizons. The Partnership for Excellence was designed to encourage highly qualified young men and women from diverse backgrounds to consider ministry as a vocation. At the undergraduate level, the program seeks to establish connections with chaplains and faculty who would mentor students considering the ministry. In addition, the program organizes a fellowship competition, which designates recipients as Undergraduate Fellows, and provides a $1,500 stipend to pursue further exploration of ministry, as well as the opportunity to participate in an annual summer conference on ministerial vocation. At the graduate level, the Partnership for Excellence offers $5,000 fellowships to entering Master of Divinity students to pursue projects of their own design during the summer for the purpose of enhancing their formation as ministers. For example, one Fellow created a ministry for homeless teenagers. He recruited, trained, and supervised a team of his fellow seminarians, and spent the summer with them ministering to youth on the streets of Atlanta.

These Ministry Fellowships also enable the recipients to participate in activities organized by the Fund, including the summer conference, where they share experiences and reflect on the challenges of pastoral leadership.

The evaluation report of the first phase of the Partnership for Excellence confirmed FTE’s success in identifying and cultivating bright, talented young people for ministry. The report noted that the Partnership, in addition to recruiting outstanding candidates for ministry, put structures and processes in place that engage young people in conversation about what attracts them to or alienates them from ministry. In this way, FTE can become a resource for churches and theological schools to understand more about young people, vocation and the call to church ministry.

The Expanding Horizons Partnership supports outstanding African-American doctoral students in theological studies. FTE works in partnership with graduate institutions to provide the necessary level of support for fellowship recipients. The Doctoral Fellows Program awards stipends of up to $15,000, renewable for one additional year. FTE is able to leverage this support by requiring the host institution to provide tuition remission for the duration of the fellowship. A one-year, non-renewable Dissertation Fellowship is also awarded to support a final year of dissertation writing. A significant aspect of the program is the support and mentoring it provides doctoral students during their fellowships, including summer conferences, dissertation writing workshops, and career information. Since 1999, when the program began, FTE has made 121 awards. The Fund also sponsors a North American Doctoral Fellows Program, which provides financial support for doctoral students in religion and theology who are from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. These awards are based on financial need and are not renewable. FTE has awarded 56 North American Doctoral Awards during this period.

Undergraduates and first-year seminary students receive mentoring and financial support in the Partnership for Excellence program.

The Partnership for Excellence was designed to encourage highly qualified young men and women from diverse backgrounds to consider ministry as a vocation.
Lilly Endowment also engaged FTE to coordinate two Lilly-funded initiatives designed to help theological schools strengthen congregational leadership: Theological Programs for High School Youth and the Program to Enhance Theological Schools’ Capacities to Prepare Congregational Leaders. Lilly Endowment awarded grants of over $55 million directly to theological schools and other institutions to create challenging programs that would engage high school youth theologically, develop new initiatives for recruiting young men and women to the ministry, and strengthen theological education. FTE provides consultative services to the 74 participating institutions, aids in establishing networks among them and creating peer learning groups, and convenes them annually for major conferences. The Fund also coordinates two other initiatives of Lilly Endowment. In the Programs for Theological Exploration of Vocation, FTE works with church-related colleges and universities to assist students in exploring vocation, especially the Christian ministry. By 2002, 88 North American colleges and universities had received Lilly grants and participated in this program. FTE also coordinates the Transition-into-Ministry program, which is designed to help graduating seminarians make the transition from full-time student to full-time pastor. Currently, 16 congregational and nine denominational programs are involved in Transition-into-Ministry grants.154

The Fund also launched a number of new initiatives. In 2002, with funding from Lilly Endowment, it began a new Congregation-Based Recruitment Program. In order to address concerns about an aging pastorate in most mainline denominations, this program seeks to involve congregations more directly in the recruitment of young people into ministry. Traditionally, FTE’s recruitment efforts had concentrated on college and university settings, and the turn to congregations marks an expansion of the Fund’s vision. At the same time, it revives FTE’s Trial-Year Fellowships for promising candidates. The nominating congregation, FTE, and the seminaries fund these awards jointly.155

In the Pastoral Leadership Search Effort (PLSE), also launched in 2002, FTE works in partnership with denominations to further the recruitment of young men and women to the ministry. FTE gathers information on potential candidates for ministry provided by congregations and maintains a secure database to facilitate communication among potential candidates, denominations, and seminaries. Members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) were the first denominational partners with FTE in both of these ventures, and have been joined by the United Methodist Church, United Church of Christ, and the Episcopal Church USA. In these new initiatives, FTE has been able to forge creative partnerships with denominations, a goal which had often eluded it in the past.

FTE continues to organize consultations on the ministry with various constituencies. As part of its Consultations on Excellence series, it has planned five regional conferences on the ministry with denominational officials, parish pastors, theological educators, and laity.156 These provide opportunities for FTE to assess the goals of its programs in the context of current expectations and anticipated needs of the ministry. FTE has also organized recruitment conferences designed to acquaint students from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups with the requirements and opportunities for doctoral study in religion and theology.157 Through the Denominational Partners initiative, FTE has also convened national church representatives to discuss recruitment of young people for the ministry.

FTE offers matching funds to congregations providing financial aid to young men and women entering a Master of Divinity program.
149. In 1997, members of the FTE board of trustees were James Costen, President Emeritus, Interdenominational Theological Center (Chair); James L. Waits, Executive Director, ATS (President); Dianne Kennedy, O.P., Dean, Aquinas Institute of Theology (Secretary); Preston T. Kelsey, II, Former Assistant to the Presiding Bishop, New York (Treasurer); Robert M. Franklin Jr., President, Interdenominational Theological Center; David A. Nasby, Director of Community Affairs, General Mills, and Vice President, General Mills Foundation.

150. The majority of financial support, however, came from Lilly Endowment Inc.

151. The most recent of the studies of the Black Doctoral Program was by Robert E. Hood in 1992. Union, FTE (uncatalogued).

152. For an overview of the financial situation of theological students, see Anthony Ruger and Barbara G. Wheeler, “Manna From Heaven: Theological and Rabbinical Student Debt,” Auburn Studies, No. 3 April, 1995.


154. Lilly Endowment Inc., Annual Report, 2002. Dr. Carol Lytch is program coordinator for Lilly Endowment’s Theological Programs for High School Youth and the Program to Enhance Theological Schools’ Capacities to Prepare Congregational Leaders; Rev. Kimberlee Maphis Early is program coordinator for Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation; and Rev. David J. Wood is program coordinator for the Transition-into-Ministry Program.

155. Under the program’s terms, the congregation pays $4,000, which FTE matches. FTE collaborates with the nominee’s school of choice to complete the Fellowship with a tuition award.

156. The first of these was held in Atlanta in October 2002. The second was held in early 2003 in Minneapolis for the Upper Midwest.

157. The first conference was held in 2002 at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta and was titled “Promoting Excellence in Theological Education.”
Today, FTE runs seven major fellowship and recruitment programs designed to attract bright young men and women to the ministry, theological scholarship, and teaching.

The rebirth of the Fund’s programs since 1995—when its operations virtually ceased—is remarkable. For the 2003–2004 academic year, the Fund offered 70 fellowships for undergraduates, representing 58 different institutions and 20 denominations. It awarded 41 ministerial fellowships for students representing 14 denominations and attending 24 theological schools. In addition, the Congregation-Based Recruitment Program offered 12 Congregational Fellowships. In the Expanding Horizons program, FTE awarded 10 new fellowships, eight renewals, four supplemental grants, and six dissertation-year grants to African-American doctoral students. The North American Doctoral Program awarded 10 fellowships to underrepresented racial/ethnic students.

Today, FTE runs seven major fellowship and recruitment programs designed to attract bright young men and women to the ministry, theological scholarship, and teaching. In addition, the Fund coordinates three major Lilly initiatives that are all designed to strengthen theological education and the Christian ministry. Every year, through programs, conferences, publications, Web sites, and recruitment efforts, FTE reaches thousands of young people, theological educators, denominational officials, and lay leaders.

The Fund’s budget is now larger than at any other point in its history, and its size reflects the expansion of its work in the last five years—which, in some respects, has made FTE a different organization. Actual outlays for fellowships and stipends are significant, but they now account for a substantially smaller portion of its budget, especially when compared to the outlays of 30 or 40 years ago. For much of the Fund’s history, fellowship programs constituted the bulk of its expenditures. These programs remain at the core of the Fund’s activities, but FTE has also taken on a larger role in the promotion of ministry more generally.

It is actively involved, at a grassroots level, in networking institutions and advocating for quality and diversity in Christian ministry. Moreover, wherever possible, FTE seeks to leverage its grants with funds and assistance from the Fellow’s institution. These changes in budget priorities constitute a shift in practice, but not necessarily one in principle.

Throughout the Fund’s history, it has always been dedicated to strengthening Christian ministry broadly, and fellowship programs were seen as a means to reach this goal rather than as an end unto themselves. This commitment was clear in the deliberations of the Fund’s founders in the 1950s as they established its first programs. While at times in the Fund’s history the vision may have been partially obscured, it remained at the core of its mission.

In 2003, Waits retired as president of the Fund and was succeeded by the Rev. Ann M. Svennungsen, who became the first woman to lead FTE. Svennungsen joins FTE at a time when it has a larger staff and is as financially robust as at any point in its history. The Fund is now poised to assume a greater role as a broad advocate for Christian ministry within theological education, the denominations, and the wider public. One of the challenges facing Svennungsen will be to continue developing the Fund’s work in new directions while maintaining its core programs.
Looming shortages and declining quality were at the forefront of issues facing theological educators in the 1950s; a half-century later, these remain pressing concerns.

Beyond Higher Education
Since the Fund’s renewal in 1998, a number of foundations have made significant contributions to it. But Lilly Endowment’s support has been critical to the organization’s financial strength, giving FTE the opportunity to expand its programs and staff. Just as the Rockefeller family foundations were dominant in the first 20 years of FTE’s existence, Lilly Endowment has become the dominant underwriter of the Fund in its latest phase. Granting agencies influence the character and shape of an organization’s work. In the 1950s, FTE’s Trial-Year Program, for instance, reflected many of the goals of the Rockefeller family foundations, with their emphasis on liberal, mainline Protestantism, and preference for theological education in elite non- or interdenominational institutions. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Fund’s programs are consonant with many goals of Lilly Endowment’s Religion Division, being much more denominationally oriented and emphasizing the strengthening of congregations in ways that the Sealantic and Rockefeller Brothers funds did not. For the first time in the Fund’s history, it is working directly with congregations, and therefore moving beyond the limits of higher education, where the Fund had previously focused its efforts.

In addition, FTE has become more denominationally oriented than it was in the past, and its cooperation and consultation with denominations in the PLSE program and elsewhere has become increasingly productive. The shift in emphasis is reflected in the institutions chosen by the Fellows. In 2002–2003, Ministry Fellows attended denominational institutions by a large margin. Prior to 1975, in contrast, Rockefeller Trial-Year Fellows primarily attended institutions without strong denominational affiliations. Yale Divinity School, Union Theological Seminary in New York, Harvard Divinity School, and the University of Chicago Divinity School attracted over three-quarters of the Trial-Year Fellows until the program ceased in 1975. In contrast, Ministry Fellows attending these institutions in 2002–2003 made up less than a quarter of the total.

The immense influence of Lilly Endowment in philanthropy for theological education and religious institutions is difficult to overstate, and its support for The Fund for Theological Education is just one of its many initiatives. In 2002, the Religion Division of Lilly Endowment made grants totaling $233 million, much of it benefiting theological education and organizations dedicated to strengthening Christian leaders. To put this in perspective, John D. Rockefeller Jr.’s gift of $20 million to the Sealantic Fund—extraordinary enough to receive special commendation in 1955 on the editorial page of the New York Times—would be equivalent to around $137 million today. In a single year, Lilly Endowment contributes more financially to theological education and improvements in the ministry than the Sealantic Fund did in its entire 20-year history. A question for the Fund in its future is the extent of its dependence on Lilly Endowment.

Ironically, perhaps, the Fund seems to thrive when there is widespread concern over the state of the Christian ministry. This was the case in the 1950s and early 1960s, when the Fund first began, and it is the case again in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In the popular press, articles continue to underscore the shortage of clergy in many denominations. Gus Niebuhr recently wrote of a growing shortage of qualified Protestant and Catholic clergy, a view shared by other journalists. Religious leaders have also raised concerns about the quality of the candidates for the ministry, some identifying a “downward spiral into pastoral mediocrity.” These concerns are echoed by other studies. A 2001 investigation by the Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education, for instance, raised significant issues about the number of high-quality candidates
Religious life in North America in the last 50 years has changed profoundly and presents new challenges to theological education and the leadership of Christian communities. While many of the same issues have persisted during the last 50 years, the work of The Fund for Theological Education in its sixth decade will take place in a thoroughly different context. Mainline Protestantism no longer has the cultural dominance it once claimed. Women, students from traditionally underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, and older students have fundamentally altered the face of theological education in North America. FTE's success in the future will depend on its ability to support excellence and foster diversity in Christian ministry while meeting the challenges of its new context.

158. These figures are based on the FTE report to Lilly Endowment dated July 31, 2003.
159. Svennungen, an ordained minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, came to FTE from Trinity Lutheran Church in Moorhead, Minnesota, where she had been senior pastor.
160. In 2003–2004, Lilly Endowment grants accounted for around 92 percent of FTE's overall funding and between 75–80 percent of funding for its core programs.
Appendix A

FTE Presidents/Executive Directors

ROBERT RANKIN, 1954–1955
WALTER D. WAGONER, 1955–1967
W. ROBERT MARTIN JR., 1974–1982
WILLIAM P. DeVEAUX, 1982–1986
J. OSCAR MCCLOUD, 1986–1995
JAMES L. WAITS, 1997–2003
ANN M. SVENNUNSEN, 2003–

FTE Directors/Associate Directors

C. SHELBY ROOKS, 1960–1967
W. ROBERT MARTIN JR., 1967–1974
EDWARD WRIGHT JR., 1975–1978
WILLIAM P. DeVEAUX, 1980–1982
MICHAEL G. RIVAS-DRUCK, 1980–1982
WALTER H. SCHENCK, 1987–1993
BENJAMIN ALICEA, 1988–1995
SHARON WATSON FLUKER, 1998–
MELISSA WIGINTON, 1998–

Board Presidents/Chairs

NATHAN M. PUSEY, 1954–1970
President, Harvard University
ROBERT F. GOHEEN, 1970–1973
President, Princeton University
JAMES I. MCCORD, 1973–1979
President, Princeton Theological Seminary
CHARLES WILLIAMS, 1979–1982
Executive, Louis Kramp Associates
THOMAS P. COUGLIN, 1982–1984
President, Mankato Stone Company
SIDNEY A. RAND, 1984–1988
President Emeritus of St. Olaf College
Former U.S. Ambassador to Norway
President Emeritus, Bangor Theological Seminary
President, Interdenominational Theological Center
GARY V. SIMPSON, 2003–
Senior Pastor, Concord Baptist Church

Appendix B

Major FTE Programs

Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fellowships (Trial-Year Program) 1954–1976. Provided one-year scholarships for talented but uncommitted students beginning ministerial degree programs. Succeeded by the North American Ministerial Fellowships.

Rockefeller Doctoral Fellowships 1959–1976. Originally designed to increase the number of Ph.Ds and Th.Ds available to teach at theological schools, it was significantly revised in 1970–1971 to offer support for African-American doctoral students only. Succeeded by Special Opportunity Program for Blacks in Doctoral Study, Doctoral Scholarships for the Study of Religion for Black North Americans and Expanding Horizons Doctoral Fellowships.


Ministerial Recruitment Program 1964–1976. Organized events and provided program funds to educate college and university students about careers in ministry.


North American Doctoral Fellows Program 1999–present. Provides one-year stipends to students from traditionally underrepresented racial/ethnic groups enrolled in doctoral programs in religion and theology.

Partnership for Excellence: Undergraduate Fellows Program 1999–present. Provides undergraduates with an introduction to theological education and ministry before enrolling at a theological school through conferences, stipends, and mentoring.

Partnership for Excellence: Ministry Fellows Program 1999–present. Supports seminary students with fellowships allowing them to pursue self-designed projects in ministry and participate in FTE events and conferences.

Congregation-Based Recruitment Program 2003–present. Provides consultations, conferences, and workshops, as well as matching funds for fellowships for one year of seminary study for candidates nominated by congregations. Jointly funded by the congregations, the schools, and FTE.

Pastoral Leadership Search Effort (PLSE) 2003–present. Cooperative effort with denominations to identify and recruit candidates for ministry. Partners include the Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church.

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FTE’s success in the future will depend on its ability to support excellence and foster diversity in Christian ministry while meeting the challenges of its new context.