

Reading REFOCUSING FOUNDATIONS FOR MINISTRY: REPORT OF...MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR PROFESSIONAL ED. FOR MIN., 18-20 June 76, re-impresses me with the difficulty of integrating theology/ministry.

- p.3, Dick Neuhaus: "Theological education no doubt needs to be re-designed, but, more important, it needs to be re-envisioned and re-impassioned." And this sketch of a pastor whose life is "a treadmill of detail, who fritters away Friday doing the Sunday bulletin, who spends two hours over TIME magazine and calls it study, who confuses ...moods with the muse, who elevates everyday discontents into the sickness unto death, who calls...laziness recreation, and who mistakes lassitude for spiritual angst--all of which turns...ministry into a shambles" he/she "describes as unstructured creativity. If professional ministry is the alternative to that, then by all means let us be professional." (P.4) P.5: "When we no longer have anything to profess, we become professional," handing in the keys of the kingdom "for certification, abandoning the mystery for a magic that does not work." P.6: Isolation is not conservative, and submission to the culture is not progressive. "Both reflect a loss of nerve." P.7: "The sin of the contemporary church is not that it is heretical but that its heresies are so very uninteresting. And where it is not heretical, it has succeeded in making the Gospel of the Kingdom something of a bore, which is perhaps the greatest heresy of all." So, we must combat "Christian" antiintellectualism, with its reduction of theology to mere "theology of...." and narcissistic questing.
- p.58, CARA (Cath. "Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate") reports on this difficulty--integrating theology, situation-discernment, and action. Here begins an article on "Theology and the Case-Study Approach," well combining storytelling (esp. from the gospels) with the method. Conversion as a change of story, as in Novak's ASCENT OF THE MOUNTAIN..., which I continue to use in the college program. Polanyi: Tacit knowledge is the ground for explicit knowledge. Compare Augustine's nisi credideritis, non intelligitis. Fiduciary framework, heuristic expectations. Some things we know by observing, and some by living in them (Heidegger's being-in-world).
- p.82, J. Randall Nichols' "Integrative Education Through Case Studies": "probably the most devastating discovery of" Princeton Seminary's "D.Min. experience has been that even among the most gifted ministers a conscious sense of 'theological connectedness' in their ministries is almost totally lacking." Students required to work on 96 cases in the two years of the D.Min.'s formal structure. Generalism toward "a theology is ministry" is the hard road: specialization is easy.
- pp.94ff: Bill's article well summarizing our NYTS "Program for Minority Ministries," at four levels:
- educational legitimization
  - theological understanding
  - professional competence
  - secular skills.