



WABASH CENTER

For Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion



Religious Researchers Websites of Interest

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Blog Series: Theological School Deans

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Tags: administration | theological school deans | research

Most theological school deans enter the office from an academic field of study---religious, theological, or ministry--distant from the field in which they now hold responsibilities: academic administration. Scholarly research soon takes a back seat to less esoteric and more pragmatic research. Spreadsheets, reports, budgets, and schedules become the daily tools to consult. It's time to trade in your Logos Bible software for a robust project management software, a tolerable student management system, and a handful of administrative apps to bring order out of the chaos that is your new normal.

Theological school deans will need to broaden their horizons beyond the scope and focus of their academic guild. They need to become knowledgeable and stay current, on a wide religious landscape in order to ensure the school's academic programs remain relevant and address the real current challenges of their constituents---congregations, denominations, and students. The training of future religious leaders requires not merely understanding current realities but anticipating future trends and challenges.



Computer Key orange - Research

Here are links to research sites that can help the dean keep her or his finger on the pulse of the religious landscape. How well do your curricular courses of study reflect or address what you find at these sites?

The Association of Religion Data Archives

A data nerd's and religion researcher's dream. Contains international and national data and statistics on religion, religious groups, and denominations, including data on U.S. congregational membership. Includes informative educational American religion timelines, and an interactive Community GSI maps and profile reports section. You can build your own congregational or student profile interactive pin map as well as viewing selected maps and areas of interest.

America's Changing Religious Identity from the Public Religion Research Institute

PRRI's research explores America's changing cultural, religious, and political landscape. PRRI's mission is to help journalists, scholars, thought leaders, clergy, and the general public better understand debates on public policy issues, and the important cultural and religious dynamics shaping American society and politics.

Cool Congregations

From Interfaith Power & Light, the Cool Congregations program is designed to support faith communities as they "walk the talk" by reducing their own carbon footprint, thus helping to cool the planet. A side benefit of the program is the 'multiplier effect,' as congregants are encouraged to model the same energy saving behavior at home that they see at their congregation.

Collegeville institute on Vocation and Collegeville Institute: Exploring Vocation in Community

The Seminar on Vocation across the Lifespan brings together theologians, social scientists, and ministers to develop a more comprehensive theology of vocation from infancy through old age. The goal of the Seminar is to create resources for congregations and seminaries on the evolving nature of Christian faith and identity throughout the stages of the lifespan. Exploring Vocation in Community was developed in 2011 to serve the broader life of the church and ground the theological work of the Seminars in the lived experiences of Christians in congregations.

50 Ways to Get a Job

What are your graduates going to do with that theological degree they just received? Truth is, in five years 50% of them will probably not be in ministry--and a goodly number will experience forced termination along their professional ministerial lifespan. 50 Ways to Get a Job is an interactive site addressing the span of vocational arc.

Studying Congregations

If you haven't come from the field of practical theology you may not be familiar with the long-standing work of the Studying Congregations projects. The site contains great tools and resources for seminarians to study congregations. Many of the frameworks and guides for studying congregations can be applicable for studying your own theological school--its context and mission.

Religious Worlds of New York

News from my home town. No city or region of the country is as religiously diverse as New York. The site offers many educational resources on religions and interfaith dialog. Given the new data from the America's Changing Religious Identity (see link above), this may be a portend of things to come. How well is your theological school preparing ministers for a more diverse world?

Sunday Assembly

The Sunday Assembly claims to be the world's fastest growing secular community. The Sunday Assembly was started by Sanderson Jones and Pippa Evans, two comedians who were on the way to a gig in Bath when they discovered they both wanted to do something that was like church but totally secular and inclusive of all--no matter what they believed. The first ever Sunday Assembly meeting took place on January 6th, 2013 at The Nave in Islington. Almost 200 people turned up at the first meeting, 300 at the second and soon people all over the world asked to start one. How's that for "church growth"?

Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada

Keeping up with the latest developments in theological education is critical to the dean. The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) is the accrediting agency for 270 graduate schools that offer post-baccalaureate professional and academic degree programs to educate persons for the practice of ministry and for teaching and research in the theological disciplines. The Commission on Accrediting of ATS accredits the schools and approves the degree programs they offer. If you're new to the deanship, ATS offers much more than you may imagine.

Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion

Bookmark this site! The Wabash Center supports teachers of religion and theology in higher education through meetings and workshops, grants, consultants, a journal and other resources to make accessible the scholarship of teaching and learning. All Wabash Center programs are funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. If you're new to the deanship, be sure to sign up for their Colloquy for Theological School Deans!

What other helpful research sites for deans have you discovered? Share your stuff.

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