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ABSTRACT

To determine the extent to which the Christian colleges serve as a source of students for selected theological seminaries in the United States, seminary catalogs with student rosters were obtained from 11 seminaries. Those included were: Gordon, Grace, Dallas, Fuller, Western Baptist, Talbot, Trinity, Eastern Baptist, Calvin, Princeton, and Bethel. The findings indicated that: (1) Christian college graduates tended to attend seminary within the same geographic region as their undergraduate college, though Princeton and Dallas drew their students from all areas of the country; (2) Christian colleges affiliated with seminaries tended to be the greatest source of Christian college graduates for that seminary; (3) Bible colleges produced a surprisingly high percentage of the total enrollment of the seminaries; (4) several seminaries received a substantial percentage (over 30 percent) of their students from the public sector; and (5) Christian colleges supplied 43 percent of the seminarians to these seminaries. (AF)

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THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE AS A SOURCE  
OF STUDENTS FOR SELECTED  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES

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Craig E. Seaton

December, 1970

## Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the Christian college serves as a source of students for selected theological seminaries in the United States. The seminaries selected each serve all of the evangelical denominations, although some of the institutions are sponsored by specific denominations. The seminaries included in the study were:

1. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary  
Wenham, Massachusetts (Interdenominational)
2. Grace Theological Seminary  
Winona Lake, Indiana (Brethren)
3. Dallas Theological Seminary  
Dallas, Texas (Interdenominational)
4. Fuller Theological Seminary  
Pasadena, California (Interdenominational)
5. Western Conservative Baptist Seminary  
Portland, Oregon (Conservative Baptist)
6. Talbot Theological Seminary  
La Mirada, California (Interdenominational)
7. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School  
Deerfield, Illinois (Evangelical Free Church of America)
8. Eastern Baptist Seminary  
St. Davids, Pennsylvania (American Baptist)
9. Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, Michigan (Christian Reformed Church)
10. Princeton Seminary  
Princeton, New Jersey (Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.)
11. Bethel Seminary  
St. Paul, Minnesota (Baptist General Conference)

Christian colleges were operationally defined by, and limited to, the directory of approximately one hundred colleges listed in The Guide to Christian Colleges (1968-69) published by Campus Life magazine.

### Introduction

The establishment of higher education in Colonial America was the result of the actions of the major religious denominations of the times. They desired a literate, college-trained clergy, and religiously orthodox, well-trained leaders in government and commerce as well. Since the Christian tradition was so important to the whole intellectual structure of the times, it was a natural occurrence for higher education to develop as a product and concern of the Christian church. Although the influence of the church was important, the colleges of this early period were not primarily oriented toward theological training. The first Seminary was founded in 1784 in New Jersey (Jencks and Riesman, 1968). All but one of the nine pre-revolutionary colleges were founded by religious denominations. They were: Harvard, 1636 (Puritans); William and Mary, 1693 (Episcopalians), Yale, 1701 (Puritans); Princeton, 1746 (Presbyterians); Columbia, 1754 (Episcopalians); University of Pennsylvania (then called, College of Philadelphia), 1755 (Interdenominational); Brown, 1764 (Baptist); Rutgers, 1766 (Dutch Reformed); and Dartmouth, 1769 (Puritans) (Brubacher and Rudy, 1968).

Before the end of the Century, the climate on the college campus underwent considerable change as the values of American society underwent change. It was out of fashion to be a Believer. A conservative reaction to the anti-religious posture brought about new life in Christian higher education between 1810 and 1850, but higher education no longer had a common undergirding (Brubacher and Rudy, 1968). One indication of the

changed relationship between higher education and Christianity was the reduced output of college graduates going into the ministry.

TABLE 1

<u>Year</u>	<u>Percentage of college graduates entering the ministry</u>
1700	50
1761	37
1801	22
1836	30
1861	20
1881	11
1900	6.5

(Data from Brubacher and Rudy, p. 10)

Institutions with a religious orientation have become fewer and fewer. By 1963, the Protestant colleges and universities were enrolling only about ten per cent of all students enrolled at four year institutions (Jencks and Riesman, 1968). Although few in number, these institutions have been hailed for producing leaders, and those entering professions of social service, particularly the ministry (Bowen, 1945).

The church is largely dependent upon our Christian colleges for trained, loyal, and effective leadership. From fifty to ninety per cent of the trained religious workers, ministers and missionaries come from the church colleges. Without these colleges the denominations know that their chief source of supply would dry up (Booth, 1930).

Sperry (1954) welcomed the product of the Christian college at Harvard Divinity School and paid tribute to Christian higher education for the large number of prospective ministers they provided. Several large national studies in 1934, 1945, and again in 1962, when all American Association of Theological Schools were polled, verified that most seminarians previously attended church related colleges (May, 1934; Hartshorne and Froyd, 1945; Bridston and Culver, 1965). The studies dealing with the

question of the undergraduate degree origins of seminarians have been of the broadest type. All undergraduate colleges having any ties with religion, whether it is an integral part of institutional philosophy or not, have been designated as church-related. The seminaries have represented all denominations and all shades of theological conviction (Patillo and MacKenzie, 1966). There have been no studies specifically concerned with Christian colleges holding historical conservative theological positions, and seminaries who prepare ministers within this tradition. This study attempted to examine the undergraduate degree origins of seminarians within this framework.

#### Method

Seminary catalogs with student rosters were obtained from eleven seminaries. These institutions were known to the researcher to fall within the limits of the study. The catalogs were examined to insure that their own statement of purpose verified the validity of their selection. The Guide to Christian Colleges, published by Campus Life, a publication of the evangelical organization "Youth for Christ International," was selected as a valid directory of Christian colleges. Only those institutions listed were viewed as Christian colleges, for the purpose of this study. A statement in the preface indicates, "you hold in your hands the most complete, up-to-date guide to evangelical schools and colleges available anywhere."

The rosters of students were examined in the following editions of seminary catalogs:

<u>SEMINARY</u>	<u>ISSUE</u>
Gordon	1970-71
Grace	1969-70
Dallas	1970
Fuller	1968-70
Western Baptist	1970-71
Talbot	1970-71
Trinity	1970-71
Eastern Baptist	1969-70
Calvin	1969-71
Princeton	1970-71
Bethel	1969-70

### Results

1. It was determined that Christian college graduates tend to attend seminary within the same geographic region as their undergraduate college. However, Dallas and Princeton Seminaries tend to draw their students from all areas of the country (Table 3, Table 4).
2. Christian colleges affiliated with seminaries tend to be the greatest source of Christian college graduates for that seminary. Trinity College is an exception, Wheaton College provided more seminarians to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School than did the affiliated college (Table 4).
3. Bible colleges produced a surprisingly high percentage of the total enrollment of the seminaries in this study. Bridston and Culver (1965). reported a figure of only .6% seminarians with Bible college origins, as compared to the following noted in this study: Grace--25%, Dallas--19%, Trinity--16%, Western--11%, Talbot--11%, (Table 2, Table 5).
4. Several seminaries received more students from the public sector than might be suspected on the basis of the Bridston and Culver (1965) study. They found that 21% of the seminarians had come from public institutions (Table 5). This is in contrast to the larger representation noted at the following institutions: Fuller--39%, Dallas-37%, Western--34% (Table 2).

5. Christian colleges supply 43% of the seminarians to the selected seminaries of this study. Since Protestant colleges enroll only about ten per cent of the total college population, and evangelical institutions a lesser figure within this category, evangelical Christian colleges are clearly over-represented in producing students for selected seminaries.
6. Those Christian colleges determined to have the highest rates of production of seminarians were, in rank order: Gordon, Biola, Bethel (Minnesota), Bryan, and Cedarville (Table 6).
7. Colleges represented at over half of the selected eleven seminaries included: Wheaton--9, Houghton--8, Gordon--7, and Biola--6.

#### Discussion

Christian colleges produce a disproportionate number of seminarians. In so doing, they help perpetuate the values of the Christian faith and provide a source of service to society that is invaluable. If there were no other reason for the continued existence of the Christian college, this, in and of itself, would provide a rationale for its place within American higher education.

It is not clear why the percentage of seminarians with Bible college origins was so much greater in this study than in previous research. Perhaps, the large number found in the current study was an artifact of the particular sample of seminaries. Or perhaps, the increasing emphasis on advanced education in all segments of society has caused many, who earlier assumed a Bible college preparation for the ministry to be adequate, to re-evaluate this position, and from this, to attempt to upgrade their preparation by attending seminary. Since Bridston and Culver's (1965) study took place at the first part of the last decade, this seems a plausible explanation.

This study has not attempted to determine which Christian college produces the greatest proportion, or greatest absolute number of students who eventually attend seminary. Rather, the concern has been to examine certain operationally defined Christian colleges and their output of seminarians to eleven seminaries thought to be prominent in the evangelical wing of Christianity. Those colleges who demonstrated the highest index of production in this study may actually produce fewer total seminarians than institutions whose students have chosen to attend seminaries not selected as part of the sample for this study.

It is apparent however, that of those Christian colleges who share much the same theological position with the seminaries of the sample, there are great differences in the proportion of students who go on to these seminaries.

Colleges affiliated with the seminary sample provide an extensive source of supply in so far as Christian college input is concerned. This input ranges from 63% at Talbot from Biola, to Calvin's 97% (Table 8).

TABLE 2

Selected Seminaries and Sources of Undergraduate Degrees of Students

All data in percentage of total enrollment of selected seminaries

<u>Student Source</u>	<u>Gordon</u>	<u>Grace</u>	<u>Dallas</u>	<u>Fuller</u>	<u>Western</u>	<u>Talbot</u>	<u>Trinity</u>	<u>Eastern</u>	<u>Calvin</u>	<u>Princeton</u>	<u>Bethel</u>
Bible College	3	25	19	5	11	11	16	4	0	1	10
Private* Col/Univ	77	59	43	50	51	63	54	83	96	73	66
Christian College	45	49	27	26	32	53	39	49	86	13	53
Public Col/Univ	13	15	37	39	34	24	24	11	2	21	22
Foreign Col/Univ	7	1	1	6	4	2	6	2	2	5	2

\*Including Christian colleges

TABLE 3Seminaries, and Colleges Producing  
the Greatest Number of Students

<u>Seminary</u>	<u>Enrollment*</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>No. of students</u>
Gordon (Mass)	268	Gordon	Mass	52
		Wheaton	Ill	23
		Barrington	R. I.	16
		Houghton	N. Y.	14
		Eastern Baptist	Penn	3
Grace (Ind)	189	Grace	Ind	39
		Cedarville	Ohio	22
		Bob Jones	S. C.	10
		John Brown	Ark	4
		Houghton	N. Y.	3
Dallas (Tex)	446	Wheaton	Ill	17
		Cedarville	Ohio	13
		Biola	Calif	11
		Bryan	Tenn	9
		Westmont	Calif	8
		Bob Jones	S. C.	8
Fuller (Calif)	257	Westmont	Calif	12
		Wheaton	Ill	7
		Biola	Calif	6
		Pasadena	Calif	4
		Seattle Pacific	Wash	4
Western (Ore)	195	Biola	Calif	25
		Seattle Pacific	Wash	15
		George Fox	Ore	3
		Southwestern	Kans	3
		Warner Pacific	Ore	3

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\*enrolled in a degree program (all types), does not include special students

TABLE 4

Seminaries, and Colleges Producing  
the Greatest Number of Students

<u>Seminary</u>	<u>Enrollment*</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>No. of students</u>
Talbot (Calif)	172	Biola	Calif	80
		Azusa Pacific	Calif	2
		Bob Jones	S.C.	2
		Seattle Pacific	Wash	2
Trinity (Ill)	391	Wheaton	Ill	29
		Trinity	Ill	27
		Houghton	N.Y.	17
		Taylor	Ind	13
		Westmont	Calif	9
Eastern (Penn)	179	Eastern Baptist	Penn	31
		Houghton	N.Y.	6
		Gordon	Mass	6
		Barrington	R.I.	6
Calvin (Mich)	272	Calvin	Mich	232
		Wheaton	Ill	1
		Eastern Baptist	Penn	1
Princeton (N.J.)	643	Houghton	N.Y.	11
		Whitworth	Wash	8
		Eastern Baptist	Penn	7
		Wheaton	Ill	6
Bethel (Minn)	240	Bethel	Minn	89
		Wheaton	Ill	8
		Seattle Pacific	Wash	6
		Tabor	Kans	5

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\*enrolled in a degree program (all types), does not include special students

TABLE 5

Types of Colleges and Universities  
 Previously Attended by 17,565 Seminarians  
 in American Association of Theological Schools  
 Fall - 1962

<u>Institution</u>	<u>*Per cent of Seminarians receiving degrees from institution indicated</u>
Public College/University	21
Private College/University	15
Denominational College/University	50
Bible College	1**
Foreign	6
Others	7

(Data from Bridston and Culver, p. 194)

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\*percentages rounded to nearest whole

\*\*actual figure -- .6

TABLE 6

Colleges with the Highest  
Index\* of Seminary Student Production\*\*

<u>College</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Index</u>
Gordon	1	9.9
Biola	2	9.4
Bethel (Minn)	3	9.3
Grace	4	8.5
Eastern Baptist	5	8.1
Calvin	6	7.3
Houghton	7	6.7
Wheaton	8	5.4
Bryan	9	5.1
Cedarville	10	4.6

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\*Based upon total number of students enrolled in seminaries in the study, divided by total enrollment of the College as indicated in Guide to Christian Colleges, multiplied by 100

\*\*Based only on seminary student production for the following seminaries: Gordon, Grace, Dallas, Fuller, Western, Talbot, Trinity, Eastern Baptist, Bethel, Calvin, Princeton

TABLE 7  
 Seminary Enrollment of Graduates of Christian  
 Colleges with Highest Production Index Rates\*  
 (in absolute numbers of students enrolled)

<u>College</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Gordon</u>	<u>Grace</u>	<u>Dallas</u>	<u>Fuller</u>	<u>Western</u>	<u>Talbot</u>	<u>Trinity</u>	<u>Eastern</u>	<u>Calvin</u>	<u>Princeton</u>	<u>Bethel</u>
Gordon	1	52	1	5	--	--	--	1	6	--	3	1
Biola	2	--	2	11	6	25	80	3	--	--	--	--
Bethel (Minn)	3	--	--	--	--	1	1	2	--	--	--	89
Grace	4	1	39	--	--	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
Eastern Baptist	5	3	--	1	--	--	--	--	31	1	7	--
Calvin	6	--	--	--	1	--	--	1	--	232	4	2
Houghton	7	14	3	5	--	--	1	17	6	--	11	2
Wheaton	8	23	2	17	7	1	--	29	--	1	6	8
Bryan	9	--	--	9	2	1	--	6	1	--	--	--
Cedarville	10	--	22	13	--	1	--	1	--	--	--	1

\*Production Index Rate  
 See page 12 for computation procedure



TABLE 8

Seminaries Affiliated with Colleges,  
 Percentage Imput from Other Christian Colleges

<u>College/Seminary</u>	<u>Affiliated Imput</u>	<u>Other Christian College Imput</u>
1. Biola/Talbot	63%	37%
2. Eastern Baptist/Eastern Baptist	72%	28%
3. Gordon/Gordon-Conwell	75%	25%
4. Grace/Grace	93%	7%
5. Bethel/Bethel (Minn)	96%	4%
6. Calvin/Calvin	97%	3%

(This data deals only with imput from Christian colleges, not with other sources)

CHRISTIAN LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES

Anderson College Anderson, Indiana	Calvin College Grand Rapids, Michigan
Arkansas College Batesville, Arkansas	Carson-Newman College Jefferson City, Tennessee
Aurora College Aurora, Illinois	Cedarville College Cedarville, Ohio
Azusa Pacific College Azusa, California	Central College Pella, Iowa
Barrington College Barrington, Rhode Island	Central College McPherson, Kansas
Belmont College Nashville, Tennessee	Central Wesleyan Central, South Carolina
Bethany Nazarene Bethany, Oklahoma	Clearwater Christian College Clearwater, Florida
Bethel College Mishawaka, Indiana	Concordia Teachers College Seward, Nebraska
Bethel College North Newton, Kansas	Covenant College Lookout Mountain, Tennessee
Bethel College St. Paul, Minnesota	Earlham College Richmond, Indiana
Biola College La Mirada, California	Eastern Baptist College St. Davids, Pennsylvania
Bridgewater College Bridgewater, Virginia	Eastern Mennonite Harrisonburg, Virginia
John Brown University Siloam Springs, Arkansas	Erskine College Due West, South Carolina
Bryan College Dayton, Tennessee	Evangel College of the Assembly of God Springfield, Missouri
California Baptist College Riverside, California	George Fox College Newburg, Oregon
California Lutheran Thousand Oaks, California	Geneva College Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania

Georgetown College Georgetown, Kentucky	Dr. Martin Luther College New Ulm, Minnesota
Gordon College Wenham, Massachusetts	Malone College Canton, Ohio
Goshen College Goshen, Indiana	Manchester College North Manchester, Indiana
Grace College Winona Lake, Indiana	Marion College Marion, Indiana
Grand Canyon College Phoenix, Arizona	Messiah College Grantham, Pennsylvania
Greenville College Greenville, Illinois	Miltonvale Wesleyan Miltonvale, Kansas
Hardin-Simmons University Abilene, Texas	Mississippi College Clinton, Mississippi
Houghton College Houghton, New York	North Park College Chicago, Illinois
Houston Baptist College Houston, Texas	Northwest College Orange City, Iowa
Huntington College Huntington, Indiana	Oklahoma Baptist University Shawnee, Oklahoma
Bob Jones University Greenville, South Carolina	Oklahoma City Southwestern College Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Judson Baptist College Portland, Oregon	Olivet Nazarene Kankakee, Illinois
Judson College Elgin, Illinois	Otterbein College Westerville, Ohio
Kentucky Southern College Louisville, Kentucky	Owosso College Owosso, Michigan
The King's College Briarcliff Manor, New York	Pacific College Fresno, California
Le Tourneau College Longview, Texas	Pacific Lutheran University Tacoma, Washington
Livingstone College Salisbury, North Carolina	Pasadena College Pasadena, California
Luther College Decorah, Iowa	Howard Payne College Brownwood, Texas

William Penn College Oskaloosa, Iowa	Trinity Christian College Palos Heights, Illinois
Pepperdine College Los Angeles, California	Trinity College Deerfield, Illinois
Pfeiffer College Misenheimer, North Carolina	Union University Jackson, Tennessee
Pikeville College Pikeville, Kentucky	University of Redlands Redlands, California
Oral Roberts University Tulsa, Oklahoma	Warner Pacific College Portland, Oregon
Roberts Wesleyan North Chili, New York	Wayland Baptist College Plainview, Texas
Seattle Pacific Seattle, Washington	Westmont College Santa Barbara, California
Sioux Falls College Sioux Falls, South Dakota	Wheaton College Wheaton, Illinois
Southeastern Christian College Winchester, Kentucky	Whitworth College Spokane, Washington
Southern California Costa Mesa, California	Wittenberg University Springfield, Ohio
Southwestern College Winfield, Kansas	
Spring Arbor College Spring Arbor, Michigan	
Sterling College Sterling, Kansas	
Tabor College Hillsboro, Kansas	
Taylor University Upland, Indiana	
Tennessee Temple Chattanooga, Tennessee	
Texas Lutheran College Seguin, Texas	
Trevecca Nazarene Nashville, Tennessee	

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