

To members of the Committee on Theological Education, PCUSA
cc Commissioners to the 224TH General Assembly, PCUSA
From Antoinette Wire, emerita professor of New Testament, San Francisco Theological Seminary

As a retired faculty member of San Francisco Theological Seminar and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, I urge you **not**, under cover of a GA consent agreement on the Council on Theological Education's report, to confirm the removal of this seminary from its long time place on the list of denominationally validated institutions training ministers in our denomination.

As the size of our denomination shrinks, we need to experiment with different ways of organizing and financing Presbyterian theological education. SFTS is testing a new model of financing the non-academic expenses through a private university in exchange for space on our campus we don't need, while the chairs of our faculty continue to be covered by each ones endowment.

As the church and academy have become more alien to each other, our church should not withdraw into its separate world. Through closer integration with other graduate programs of a university, in our case perhaps with the Redlands education department which might share our campus, ministers in training can make colleagues of other professionals and develop a common language that will strengthen their future work.

San Francisco Theological Seminary, though now smaller than it once was, has specific strengths that are crucial in future theological education. It has a long and hard-fought tradition of developing a faculty inclusive of minorities and women whose leadership and scholarship have been essential in our west coast culture. SFTS helped to establish and our faculty will continue to teach in the Graduate Theological Union of Berkeley, eight seminaries and a circle of teaching centers that represent other faith traditions. The GTU is affiliated with UC Berkeley so that every doctoral student has UCB faculty on his or her committee and the GTU is open to seminary graduates from across the country.

Finally, the SFTS teaching faculty and the seminary programs for the church continue in the same location with the same links to teaching churches and multiple loyal alumni and friends. It is not reasonable to think that Redlands University, which has taken us on in order to have a base in northern California, will sell the property after the guaranteed years. We expect to function as San Francisco Theological Seminary for years to come and test new forms of education for the church. Why not give us a chance?

Sincerely, Antoinette Clark Wire

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