

To My Colleagues on the Divinity School Study Committee:

There is a centuries-old concept in Western European and American universities that the study of theology--or religion, if one prefers--is an integral part of an educational curriculum. In the history of many institutions, both in the Catholic and in the Protestant tradition, theology has been seen, in fact, as the very foundation stone of education. It can certainly be argued that the founders of Wake Forest University saw the study and practice of religion as an educational premise to which all other disciplines should be somehow related. Even though most of the institutions of the West may have departed in some way from their founding faiths and become more "secular," many of the best of these institutions have retained divinity or theological schools as essential units of the university. One thinks immediately of Yale and Harvard in the North and of Duke, Emory, and Vanderbilt in the South, to mention just a few.

Against this historical background it seems altogether logical, from an educational point of view, that Wake Forest should consider having a school of theology. We have already made professional commitments at the postgraduate level in medicine, law, and management, fields which are perhaps even less related to our founding educational principles, and to extend our offerings into the postgraduate study of theology would be to affirm our commitment to a comprehensiveness in education which is thoroughly in keeping with our own past and with widely recognized educational ideals.

Edwin G. Wilson
Provost