SECTION 4

POSSIBILITIES:
A SYMPOSIUM

This collection of supervisory practices using digital technology provides an opportunity to examine the use, or intended use, of digital technology in formation and supervision. The emergence of digital technology has, indeed, increased a wide-range of possibilities for formation and supervision heretofore unimaginable. Some of the readers may be in contexts in which the digital possibilities described seem like a distant dream. Others of you may already have surpassed even the most creative contribution in this section. It has been our editorial intent to establish a regular pattern of including articles about best practices in the journal. We welcome accounts of your practice, or your response to these articles, on our website at www.reflective-practice.org.

The work of formation and supervision in a digital age will be forged between the bold exploration of the possibilities that technology invites and the limits imposed by human physicality and particularity. Søren Kierkegaard once observed that too much possibility is one of the great dangers of life. Imagining that possibilities are infinite ignores human limits. Yet the capacity to imagine new possibilities signifies human freedom in a way that can provoke anxiety. Too much possibility overvalues the symbolic self that is forged between possibility and finitude. Technology rush risks overlooking dimensions of the human that are inescapably embodied. On the other hand, the anxiety that new possibilities evoke needs to be embraced with courage, lest we overlook the new freedom that digital technology brings. Since this Journal is now available around the globe, it is important to acknowledge that digital technology creates barriers as it bridges distances. Social networking connects people who can afford it and separates those who cannot.

The possibility of overcoming distance with technology is perhaps the greatest benefit of the new technology for theological education and preparing future religious leaders. Although distance learning has been common in secular education for some time, it is now both regular and necessary. In 1999, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) devoted an issue of *Theological Education* to the topic of educational technology and distance education. In that publication, distance education was defined as the "learning experience for students who are geographically separated from faculty

and other students."[1] Digital technology has not only expanded the accessibility to resources and spawned new learning communities for residential students; it has multiplied the number of individuals who might consider ministry or simply study theology through distance learning.

The following articles about new practices of supervision also testify to the creativity and the courage needed to explore new possibilities without overlooking the human dimension. The contexts and the supervisory agenda vary but there are common issues about the use of digital technology to expand the possibilities for supervision and peer-consultation. The hope is that you might discover new possibilities and limits for the use of digital technology in your own context. The reflections by four ACPE supervisors in training introduce a dimension of concreteness to this section. Their observations add another layer to reflective practice in action.

Herbert Anderson
Editor

NOTE

1. Daniel O. Aleshire and Katherine E. Amos, "Theme Introduction: Distance Education and the Association of Theological Schools," *Theological Education* 36, no. 1 (Autumn 1999): ix.