

## APPENDIX G

### FEEDBACK

Feedback is specific comment on what one observes about the student and the way he or she approaches the functions of ministry. It involves describing to the student how his or her behavior is seen and how it affects people and organizations. The goal of feedback is to appraise the student in a manner which empowers him or her for future actions and which enables him or her to develop the art of self-appraisal. In providing feedback to the student, it is important to understand the following:

1. It is *descriptive rather than evaluative*. By describing one's own perception, it leaves the other free to use the feedback to the extent that he or she is able. Avoiding the use of evaluative language reduces the need for a defensive reaction.
2. It is *specific rather than general*. To be told that one is "dominating" is not as useful as to be told that, "When you were deciding the issue with the Worship Committee this afternoon, you did not listen to what was being said, and I felt forced to accept your arguments or face attack from you."
3. It takes into account the *needs of both the receiver and giver*. Feedback is often destructive if it is used to punish the student, "to get something off our chests," or to show superiority over the student.
4. It is directed toward *behavior which the student can correct*. Feedback about personality can be ego-destructive and needs to be done with sensitivity.
5. It is *solicited rather than imposed*. It is most helpful when it is expected or requested by the receiver. In any case, feedback should be an agreed upon norm of the student-supervisor relationship.
6. It is *well-timed*. If there is a readiness to hear, it is most useful at the earliest opportunity after a given event of ministry.
7. It is *checked* to insure clear communication and accuracy of the receiver's perception.
8. It can be *either positive or negative*. Affirming feedback, as well as critical confrontation with the need to change, are important for growth.

(Excerpts from Nicholas Van Dyck's "Supervision in Theological Field Education: Shaping a Person-Oriented Working Relationship," *Theological Education*, Vol. XII, No. 4, pp. 236-244.)