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**Mission Studies in Theological Education**

PhD, Bernhard Ott

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# **Mission Studies in Theological Education**

## **A Critical Analysis of Mission Training in Evangelical Bible College and Seminaries in Germany and German-speaking Switzerland**

PhD Thesis, Bernhard Ott (2000)

### **Abstract**

This is an inquiry into the development of mission studies in evangelical theological education in Germany and German-speaking Switzerland in the light of the paradigm shifts which have been taking place both in theology of mission and in theological education.

In particular, the study analyses the recent history (1960 to 1995) of a group of Bible colleges in German-speaking Europe. It outlines recent developments in this group and identifies its contributions to the wider arena of mission studies and theological education.

Based on David Bosch's proposal of an emerging ecumenical paradigm of mission, the study analyses the aforementioned schools. It demonstrates that, under the influence of the theology of Peter Beyerhaus and the Frankfurt Declaration, these schools defend conservative positions as a matter of apologetics and are not developing in the direction of Bosch's proposal. The thesis identifies hermeneutics as the key issue in the divergence and reflects upon the consequences of such a position both for the schools as well as for Bosch's proposal.

Synthesising recent strands of reflection on theological education, the thesis proposes an emerging new paradigm of theological education, which has the potential of serving as a standard for the analysis of theological education in various contexts. The study itself applies this paradigm to the schools in question and demonstrates that the evangelical Bible school movement has historically embodied many of the features for which the 'new paradigm' calls. On the other hand, the thesis shows evidence that accreditation has jeopardised this heritage, and it calls for a review of accreditation procedures. The analysis also reveals that these schools tend to resist changes in the area of contextual and inductive learning. It is argued that theological conservatism causes the schools to resist changes in areas of epistemological significance.

Finally, the study critically reflects upon the schools' pattern of change and change resistance. Through the application of the change theories of Kuhn and MacIntyre, hermeneutical and epistemological issues are identified as determining factors in the change-resisting attitude inherited by institutionalised conservatism.